



NAVAL  
POSTGRADUATE  
SCHOOL

MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA

**THESIS**

STUDY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE STUDENT  
TESTING PROGRAM

by

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March 2005

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<b>REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE</b>			<i>Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188</i>	
Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instruction, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302, and to the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (0704-0188) Washington DC 20503.				
1. AGENCY USE ONLY (Leave blank)		2. REPORT DATE March 2005		3. REPORT TYPE AND DATES COVERED Master's Thesis
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE: Study of the Department of Defense Student Testing Program			5. FUNDING NUMBERS	
6. AUTHOR(S) Lance G. Davidson				
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Naval Postgraduate School Monterey, CA 93943-5000			8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING /MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Center for Recruiting Innovation Naval Postgraduate School			10. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY REPORT NUMBER	
11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES The views expressed in this thesis are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of Defense or the U.S. Government.				
12a. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited.			12b. DISTRIBUTION CODE	
13. ABSTRACT <p>This study evaluates selected features of the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) Career Exploration Program (CEP) and its contributions to Navy recruiting. The ASVAB-CEP is a Department of Defense program created in 1968, operating in 12,598 high schools throughout the nation as of 2004. ASVAB-CEP data for all military services (1998-2004) were examined, along with previous studies and literature on the program. An online survey was developed and administered to Navy Recruiters-in-Charge (RINCs). Results show a steady decline of high school juniors and seniors tested, high schools tested, recruiter leads, and accessions. Survey results indicate that RINCs are generally positive toward the program as a source of leads and in gaining access to schools, but question the value in testing sophomores. Several recommendations are offered to improve the program. In addition, further research is recommended.</p>				
14. SUBJECT TERMS ASVAB, CEP, STP, Leads, Accessions, Recruits, Recruiters-in-Charge (RINCs), AFQT, Testing, High School Students			15. NUMBER OF PAGES 107	
			16. PRICE CODE	
17. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF REPORT Unclassified	18. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE Unclassified	19. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF ABSTRACT Unclassified	20. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT UL	

NSN 7540-01-280-5500

Standard Form 298 (Rev. 2-89)  
Prescribed by ANSI Std. Z39-18

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STUDY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE STUDENT TESTING PROGRAM

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

from the

NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL  
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## ABSTRACT

This study evaluates selected features of the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) Career Exploration Program (CEP) and its contributions to Navy recruiting. The ASVAB-CEP is a Department of Defense program created in 1968, operating in 12,598 high schools throughout the nation as of 2004. ASVAB-CEP data for all military services (1998-2004) were examined, along with previous studies and literature on the program. An online survey was developed and administered to Navy Recruiters-in-Charge (RINCs). Results show a steady decline of high school juniors and seniors tested, high schools tested, recruiter leads, and accessions. Survey results indicate that RINCs are generally positive toward the program as a source of leads and in gaining access to schools, but question the value in testing sophomores. Several recommendations are offered to improve the program. In addition, further research is recommended.

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The author expresses his sincere appreciation to LT Alfonzo Garcia (NPS Student) for helping design the recruiter survey for this study, Mr. Don Hill (USMEPCOM) for providing the testing statistics used extensively throughout the study, and Mr. John Noble (CNRC) for providing the fiscal year 2004 Navy accession data for comparison. Further, I greatly appreciate the guidance, mentoring and promptness of my advisor, Professor Mark Eitelberg. His extensive knowledge of the ASVAB was a major factor that influenced the style and content of this report.

The author also thanks his wonderful wife, Sharon, for her unselfishness and everlasting support throughout this thesis process.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

### A. BACKGROUND

In 1966, the Department of Defense directed the different branches of the Armed Forces to work together in developing a single test that could be used in America's high schools. Up to that point, each of the Services had developed and administered its own tests to generate recruiting leads from the high schools; however, the scores from the tests could not be used to qualify applicants for enlistment.

The development of a single test was realized in 1968 with the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB). In early 1973, the Department of Defense Student Testing Program (STP) was overhauled and later (1992) renamed the ASVAB Career Exploration Program (CEP). This overhaul of the program in early 1973 allowed all high school ASVAB scores to be used for enlistment screening, and came only months before the start of the All-Volunteer Force in July 1973.

For the past 20-25 years, the ASVAB high school program has provided the services with a valuable source of recruiting leads. Recruiters receive a list of students with pre-qualified ASVAB scores, and high school juniors and seniors provide personal information (including social security numbers, home phone numbers, home addresses) on the test. The applicants may also indicate on the test if they are interested in a military career. These types of leads help recruiters save valuable time and effort, especially if the applicant achieves the minimum qualifying

score. With a qualifying score on a high school ASVAB, the applicant is not required to retest again at a Military Entrance Processing Station (MEPS) or Mobile Examining Team (MET) site. The applicant's high school ASVAB becomes his or her score of record.

Military recruiting has the reputation of being one of the most difficult jobs to which a service member can be assigned. It is characterized by long hours, consistent rejection, and stress in contracting a quota of young men and women every month. The ASVAB-CEP can relieve some stress when recruiters are given a list of potentially qualified applicants with contact information.

The ASVAB-CEP has been a very popular recruiting tool. In fact, over the past seven years, about 16 percent of all new recruits have enlisted in the military with a test score from the ASVAB-CEP. This equates to about 30,500 new recruits each year over the same period. Furthermore, over 12,000 high schools use the ASVAB-CEP every year, testing over 650,000 juniors and seniors (MEPCOM).

The ASVAB-CEP has many stakeholders. The program is "sold" to the high schools as a "counseling tool for guiding students in their academic and vocational programs" (MEPCOM Website). The Education Service Specialist (ESS), a civilian, at each MEPS has the main responsibility of promoting the program to the high schools in his or her area of responsibility. The ESS also presents post-test interpretations of the ASVAB results for high school students, if requested. The local MEPS is responsible for scheduling the testing in high schools. There are 65 MEPSS in the United States, including one in Puerto Rico. The

MEPSs periodically send the recruiting services a master testing schedule, and updates changes to the schedule. The recruiting services are expected to provide proctors (normally the recruiters assigned to a particular high school) on the day of testing. The requirement is to have one proctor for every forty students.

The Department of Defense has contracted the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to provide trained Test Administrators (TAs) to administer the ASVAB at high schools. These TAs do not work for the Military Entrance Processing Command (MEPCOM), but in conjunction with a local MEPS. The MEPSs coordinate with OPM to provide TAs. The OPM TAs administer the ASVABs for approximately 80 percent of all high schools. Each MEPS provides its own TAs to cover the other 20 percent.

As seen here, many different agencies work together on the ASVAB-CEP. The program is "a nationally-normed multi-aptitude test battery" (ASVAB Educator and Counselor Guide, 4), administered at no cost to the schools. This is a major selling point. However, even though the program is essentially free, only 56.8 percent of U.S. high schools used the ASVAB in fiscal 2004. Additionally, in 2004, from a population of 6,376,912 eligible juniors and seniors, 651,065 (10.2 percent) took the high school ASVAB. The number of juniors and seniors tested over the past seven years has steadily dropped, from a high of 948,825 in 1999 to 651,065 in 2004 (MEPCOM).

The declining popularity of the program has had an impact on military recruiting. If recruiters are unable to enlist high school seniors, then they must look for

applicants in the workforce to maintain sufficient recruiting numbers. Obviously, with only about half of U.S. high schools participating in the program, many recruiters rely on different recruiting techniques to find high school graduates in the workforce. Some recruiters might view the high school ASVAB as very productive, while others might see it a waste of time and money.

For over three decades, the ASVAB-CEP has provided military recruiters with access to high schools and leads for enlistment. According to Department of Defense Directive 1304.12 (1993,4), the purposes of the DoD Student Testing Program are twofold:

- 1) Provide the Military Services with access to the high school market and recruiters with prequalified recruiting leads.
- 2) Gain access to the high-quality high school market for recruiters.

When the United States military ended conscription in 1973, the nation was still feeling the effects of the Vietnam War. A fair amount of anti-military sentiment survived the controversial war. This made recruiting even more difficult. The high school ASVAB was an inventive way of helping recruiters gain access to America's high schools, while offering young high school students an opportunity to "gain a good sense of their career-related skills and competencies" (ASVAB Educator and Counselor Guide, 3).

Military recruiting has since had its ups and downs. Some things have not changed, however. The high school ASVAB still provides recruiters with leads and access to

high schools; recruiting goals are still quite difficult to attain; and recruiters still proctor in the high school testing program.

At the same time, the military seeks higher quality recruits, requiring generally higher scores on the ASVAB than when the program began. Also, with the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act (U.S. Congress, 2002), "each local educational agency receiving assistance under this Act shall provide, on a request made by military recruiters or an institution of higher education, access to secondary school students names, addresses, and telephone listings." This Act has opened up some previously closed doors for recruiters. If a high school does not provide military recruiters with the same information given to colleges, the high school could lose federal aid. Recruiters depend heavily on school student lists to call prospective applicants. These lists can be even more valuable than high school ASVAB lists, because there are potentially many more names with which to work.

#### B. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The primary purpose of this study is to examine the views of a major stakeholder, the Navy recruiter, regarding the effectiveness of the program. Is the program an effective recruiting tool? What can be done to improve the program, if anything? What are the most significant problems with the program, if any, and can they be corrected? What are the ASVAB-CEP's objectives and how are they being measured? Is the program still needed? What kinds of recruits are coming out of the program? Are high schools and students taking full advantage of the career-guidance benefits of the program?

More specifically, this study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. Is the Student Testing Program an effective DoD accession program, particularly for the Navy?
2. How many recruits enlist with a student ASVAB each year?
3. How many high schools use the free Career Exploration Program for their students?
4. How many qualified leads are being generated for the recruiting services through the ASVAB-CEP?
5. How do test score averages from the Student Testing Program compare with those administered at a MEPS or MET site for direct enlistment?
6. What are the views and attitudes of Navy Recruiters-in-Charge regarding the ASVAB-CEP?

#### C. SCOPE, METHODOLOGY, AND LIMITATIONS

This study includes the following as part of its approach: a review of literature on the DoD Student Testing Program; development, administration, and analysis of an online survey of the attitudes and opinions of Navy Recruiters-in-Charge; an analysis of MEPCOM testing data; and an analysis of ASVAB scores from the ASVAB-CEP, MET site testing, and MEPS testing for enlistment.

A qualitative methodology is employed here, depending heavily on the views and attitudes of Navy recruiters through the online survey, past qualitative reports on the history of the DoD Student Testing Program, regulations on the STP, and related articles. ASVAB statistics were provided by MEPCOM; ASVAB-CEP materials (manuals & guides) were obtained from the Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC).

This study is limited in at least two ways. First, the recruiters' attitudes and opinions come from one source only, the Navy. Recruiters from the other services may have different experiences with the ASVAB-CEP, depending on



their recruiting situations. Second, this study only uses Navy accession data to study the effectiveness of the program. The other services may have more or less accessions who can be attributed to the ASVAB-CEP, resulting in different measures of success.

#### D. ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS

Chapter II presents an overview of the ASVAB-CEP, starting with its origins, and ending with the program as it is today. Chapter III details the methodology used in the study. This chapter also includes a description of the online survey and literature examined. Chapter IV analyzes the responses and comments of Navy RINCs who participated in an online survey on the ASVAB-CEP. Their responses are compared with the recruiter responses of a similar survey administered in 1999. The chapter ends with a look at how the responses of recruiters relate to the many facets of the program and sets the tone for the rest of the thesis. Chapter V looks at testing statistics for the program, and examines recruiting data. This chapter also identifies patterns in testing numbers and participation. It serves as a factual depository to evaluate how the ASVAB-CEP is benefiting military recruiting as well as the students themselves in gaining career-guidance. Chapter VI summarizes the results from preceding chapters, presents conclusions, and offers recommendations for the ASVAB-CEP.

Three appendices appear at the end of the study: (A) a copy of the ASVAB-CEP survey questions; (B) detailed results of the online survey; and (C) a collection of the comments provided by Navy RINCs on the survey.

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## II. HISTORY AND OVERVIEW OF DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE TESTING IN HIGH SCHOOLS

### A. HISTORY

In 1958, the United States Air Force was using a version of the Airman Classification Battery to test students in American high schools. Soon after, all of the military Services had developed their own tests for high school students. These tests were used to generate leads only, and not valid for enlistment purposes. Some schools started to complain about the number of military tests administered at their institutions. The Department of Defense sensed that something needed to be done before the Student Testing Program (STP), as it was then called, lost customers, and more importantly, valuable leads. As Maier (1993, iv) writes:

In 1966, the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Force Management and Personnel (OASD-FM&P) directed the Services to develop a single test battery that could be used for vocational counseling of students and that would provide information useful in the accessioning process, such as accurate estimates of AFQT scores.

One result of collaboration by the Services was the development of the first Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) in 1968. ASVAB Form 1 was used by all of the Services to test high school students in school year 1968-1969. According to Eitelberg and his colleagues (1982, 2), "The test was usually offered to the schools on the basis of its usefulness in civilian counseling as well as its application in military recruiting, and test results were provided to counselors and other school officials."

The test was used for leads only until 1973, when ASVAB Form 2 replaced Form 1 for use in the high schools. Around the same time, ASVAB Form 3 was developed by the Air Force to test applicants for enlistment only. In July 1974, the Marine Corps also started using Form 3 for enlistment testing, although it was not used in the high schools. At the same time, the other Services were still using their own classification batteries for enlistment testing. (Maier 1993)

No year is more significant to military testing than 1976. That year brought major changes to student and enlistment testing. First, a joint-service ASVAB was developed and used by all the services. Form 5 was administered in the high schools, while Forms 6 and 7 were administered at the Military Entrance Processing Stations (MEPSs) for enlistment. (Maier 1993) Second, the Military Entrance Processing Command (MEPCOM) was formed. With 65 stations across America and Puerto Rico, MEPCOM assumed the responsibility of military applicant processing, which included all ASVAB testing. MEPCOM also assumed responsibility for the printing and distribution of all ASVAB materials, including enlistment and student materials for the STP. After nearly ten years of seeming disarray, with Services using different qualifying tests, the military testing program finally had one executive agent, MEPCOM, responsible for ASVAB testing. To this day, ASVAB remains the only test used to qualify high school students (high school ASVAB) and others (enlistment ASVAB) for enlistment in the U.S. military.

B. THE ASVAB CAREER EXPLORATION PROGRAM (CEP)

If 1976 was the most significant year for military testing, then 1992 was a close second. In that year, the STP would undergo another transformation. According to Laurence and Ramsberger (1999, 49):

The forerunner to the Career Exploration Program (CEP)—the DoD Student Testing Program (STP)—was introduced in 1968 by the Department of Defense as a means of offering high school students the opportunity to take the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB). Since the original implementation of the STP, many revisions have been introduced. The most recent, known as the ASVAB 18/19 Career Exploration Program, was implemented in July 1992.

The ASVAB materials used for career counseling of students were modest and changed over time until 1992. But the ASVAB-CEP set high professional standards with state-of-the-art methods supporting ASVAB test materials for students and counselors. More emphasis was placed on career counseling, as ASVAB scores were matched to military and civilian occupations.

Most recently, ASVAB Forms 18 and 19 were replaced with versions 23 and 24 for school year 2002-2003. Additionally, the updated version of the student ASVAB lowered the total number of subtests from ten to eight. This is a significant change, considering ten subtests had been used since 1980 and the ASVAB's content had remained the same for so long (Maier 1993, 40). The Numerical Operations and Coding Speed subtests were the two subtests deleted from the updated ASVAB, shortening the total test time by ten minutes. The eight remaining ASVAB subtests are listed in Table 1.

Table 1. ASVAB Subtests by Number of Items and Testing Time

Subtest	Number of Items	Testing Time
General Science	25	11 min.
Arithmetic Reasoning	30	36 min.
Word Knowledge	35	11 min.
Paragraph Comprehension	15	13 min.
Mathematics Knowledge	25	24 min.
Electronics Information	20	9 min.
Auto & Shop Information	25	11 min.
Mechanical Comprehension	25	19 min.
Total	200	2 hrs 24 min.
Administrative Time	Approximately 30 min.	
Total Time	Approximately 3 hrs	

Source: ASVAB Educator & Counselor Guide, July 2002.

What is the purpose of the ASVAB-CEP? As noted previously, DoD Directive 1304.12 states it is to provide access for recruiters to the high schools, obtain recruiting leads, and prospect the high-quality high school market. USMEPCOM Reg 601-4 (1997, 2-1) states: "The purpose of the STP is to provide leads for the recruiting Services and a career counseling and exploration instrument to counselors and students." Additionally, Army Regulation 601-222 (1994, 3-1) states:

This program is offered to provide secondary and post-secondary schools and students assistance in curriculum planning, vocational and career counseling and group assessment. The program, also known as the Career Exploration Program, provides names of potential recruits to the Military Services.

Finally, the front page of the DoD ASVAB Website (February 2005) states: "This program is designed to help

students learn more about themselves and the world of work, identify and explore potentially satisfying occupations, and develop an effective strategy to realize their goals." No mention is made of the military on this page, and all pictures are of young high school students.

The CEP was redesigned in 2002 in conjunction with the release of ASVAB high school Forms 23 and 24. According to the DoD ASVAB Website (February 2005), the test "was re-designed to be helpful to virtually all students, whether they are planning on immediate employment after high school in civilian or military occupations, or further education at a university, community college, or vocational institution." The updated CEP materials include:

- 1) Exploring Careers: The ASVAB Career Exploration Guide with Interest Finder and OCCU-FIND
- 2) Military Careers
- 3) My Educational and Career Plans
- 4) Coursework Planner
- 5) Major Finder
- 6) Counselor Manual
- 7) Technical Manual
- 8) Educator & Counselor Guide
- 9) Student & Parent Guide

These materials are, again, state-of-the-art, and they explain the CEP very well. None of the materials mention that the ASVAB scores and personal information on students are a primary source of leads for military recruiters. However, the ASVAB Student & Parent Guide (2002, 10) explains, "The military services use this information for recruiting and research."

From 1998 through 2004, the ASVAB-CEP has tested an average of 832,938 students in 12,894 schools annually. According to USMEPCOM Reg 601-4 (1997, 2-1):

It is available to students in the 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> grades, and to students in post-secondary schools (2-year community colleges, vocational/technical schools), college prep schools, and Job Corps centers. Four-year colleges may use the ASVAB student test.

The 11th and 12th grade students (discussed further in Chapter IV) are the main market, since ASVAB scores are valid for enlistment for only two years. The 10th graders are offered the test, but their scores cannot be used for enlistment.

From 1998 through 2004, MEPCOM tested an average of 93,620 high school sophomores annually. The numbers have steadily declined over that time frame, from a high of 128,230 in 1998 to 70,399 in 2004. This is one trend the recruiting services are happy to see, since they do not have to provide as many resources for a category of students that gives them no immediate return on investment.

The recruiting services and MEPCOM have not been entirely successful testing in the post-secondary schools. Over the 1998-2004 period, the number of post-secondary students tested averaged 1,496 annually, with a high of 1,819 in 1999 and a low of 985 in 2004. This is a market the recruiting services have been trying to penetrate for many years.



C. CRITICISMS OF THE STUDENT TESTING PROGRAM (STP)

1. Smoke and Mirrors

Since the early 1970s, the STP has been accused of being a "clandestine" governmental operation to brainwash young men and women into joining the Armed Forces. According to Maier (1993, 56):

The role of the military in the STP was not always so apparent; the issue came to a head in the mid-1970s through the efforts of Congressman Mosher from Ohio. His concern in this area was the evident obfuscation of the connection between the STP and military recruiting.

The result of Congressman Mosher's efforts was the development of eight release options for high school officials. These options allow high schools to choose how the information obtained on students can be used. As seen in Table 2, the options range from "no special instructions" to "no recruiter contact."

Table 2. Information Release Options under ASVAB-CEP

Option	Description
1	No special instructions. Release results to recruiting military services 7 days after test scores are mailed
2	Release results to recruiters 60 days after test scores are mailed. No recruiter contact prior to that time.
3	Release results to recruiters 90 days after test scores are mailed. No recruiter contact prior to that time.
4	Release results to recruiters 120 days after test scores are mailed. No recruiter contact prior to that time.
5	Release results to recruiters at the end of the school year. No recruiter contact prior to that time.
6	Release results to recruiting military services 7 days after test scores are mailed. No telephone solicitations by recruiter based on the student names provided with the listing of student results.
7	Not valid for enlistment purposes. Results not released to recruiting military services.
8	No recruiter contact from this listing of student results. Results not released to recruiting services.

Source: USMEPCOM Reg 601-4, October 1997.

Of course, the recruiting services hope that all schools choose Option 1. A high school official, usually a guidance counselor, ultimately decides on which option is best for the school. Parents and students have no input on the decision. In fact, the options are not listed in the

Student & Parent Guide or Educator & Counselor Guide of the ASVAB materials distributed to the high schools. Rogers (1996, 3) states:

This is perhaps the element of the ASVAB program most subject to criticism, in that schools are allowed to make a decision to release test information to military recruiters who then use testing lists and results to contact students. This seems to ignore any element of parental consent, places a burden of decision on school officials, and subjects students to perhaps unwanted solicitation by military recruiters.

Some people still believe that the military is using the ASVAB-CEP as a "covert recruiting tool" (Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors 2004, 1). According to the Objectors, one might legitimately ask: "ASVAB: A Wolf in Sheep's Clothing?" And, as the author of the article claims, "No correlation has been established between ASVAB scores and civilian career skills" (Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors October 2004, 1).

## 2. Is the ASVAB Valid for Career Counseling?

Numerous studies have examined the reliability and validity of the ASVAB. According to Sellman (2004, 13): "A central concern of high school counselors about testing is whether the tests they use are valid for career counseling." Sellman (2004, 13) also states, "research indicates that the student ASVAB is a valid predictor of performance in various civilian occupations."

Not everyone agrees, as Maier (1993, 60) observes: "In 1992, a study to validate the current ASVAB against supervisors' ratings for job performance was completed for 11 civilian occupations." While this study did validate 11 civilian occupations that high school students may choose

to pursue, it was not all-conclusive. Because a concurrent validity study was completed instead of a predictive validity study, critics still found problems with the analysis study and questioned the use of ASVAB results for career counseling of students (Maier 1993, 60).

For over 30 years, the ASVAB has been used to classify potential military enlistees with great success. It has been a good predictor in that respect. However, little information exists as to whether it is a good predictor for civilian careers. Rogers (1996, 4) adds, "Researchers differ on how predictive ASVAB scores are for civilian job selection and performance." Perhaps that is why United States Army Recruiting (USAREC) Regulation 601-59 (1996, 1) places a disclaimer in its official regulations: "Claims that ASVAB results are directly related to civilian occupations will not be made unless supported by documented research findings."

### 3. Post-Test Interpretations

The Department of Defense, specifically MEPCOM, prints and distributes supporting materials on ASVAB student testing for about 900,000 students and 13,000 schools per year, costing hundreds of thousands of dollars. In fact, the entire STP was estimated to cost roughly \$12,000,000 in 1998 (Laurence and Ramsberger 1999, 7-8).

How does DoD know that its materials are being utilized? This is a difficult question to answer. More importantly, how does DoD know students are receiving ASVAB post-test interpretations to understand their test scores and actually receive career counseling? Again, this is a difficult question to answer.

MEPCOM has each of the 65 MEPS send out supporting materials for ASVAB testing to the high schools. After that, it is up to the schools to use them. If a MEPS Education Service Specialist (ESS), Recruiting ESS, or recruiter do not go to the school to perform the post-test interpretation, then it is up to the school to ensure it is completed. The ESSs attempt to train high school counselors to perform the interpretations, but it is not mandatory. MEPCOM does not track how many post-test interpretations are conducted by ESSs, nor do the recruiting services track their personnel. Besides, the majority of recruiters are not trained on how to conduct the interpretations, and they generally do not have the time to do so. (The situation for recruiters is discussed in Chapter III.) The ASVAB-CEP Counselor Manual (2002, 16) states:

After students have completed the ASVAB, they are encouraged to attend a post-test interpretation session. This session takes place after the school receives the ASVAB Summary Results and focuses on the use of the ASVAB results for career exploration. While the ASVAB is administered by qualified test administrators from DoD or the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM), civilian DoD Education Service Specialists typically lead the post-test interpretation (or train school or military personnel to conduct a session). In this session, students learn how to use their test scores along with *Exploring Careers: The ASVAB Career Exploration Guide* to begin the career exploration process. This is the heart of the ASVAB program, so we urge you to encourage your students to attend a post-test interpretation session.

If the post-test interpretation is the heart of the ASVAB program, then why is it not emphasized more? A post-test interpretation usually takes about an hour to conduct. So, in conjunction with a 3-hour ASVAB test, the school would also have to allow its students another hour at some point later (normally 2-4 weeks) for the interpretation. Additionally, a MEPS ESS could have anywhere from 100 to 500 schools under his or her responsibility. It is very difficult for a MEPS ESS to conduct interpretations for everyone. DoD distributes outstanding state-of-the-art supporting materials on ASVAB testing to the high schools, but does not know if they are even being used. For example, one particular MEPS ESS went into a guidance counselor's office and noticed the ASVAB materials he delivered the year before had not been moved. The materials were apparently never used. (Honolulu MEPS ESS, 2002) Is this an isolated incident, or is it true for a majority of schools?

#### 4. Identity Concerns

How does DoD know that a particular high school student has actually taken the test for himself or herself, or if the student used a "ringer" or substitute? There is no way to tell. Of the 213,814 recruits who joined the military using high school ASVAB scores since 1998, DoD is unable to actually prove that any one of them was the actual person who took the test. In a high school test, no identification or photographs of test takers are checked. The students sign a Privacy Act statement, but the signatures are not checked for enlistment purposes. After the test is scored, and if the student's score qualifies for enlistment, then the student can apply for enlistment

in the United States military. It is very easy in a large or even small student testing session for two students to take the test for one another. Nobody, besides the students, would ever know. It is very easy to cheat in this way on the ASVAB used in high schools.

It is significantly more difficult to cheat on an enlistment test at a MEPS or MET site. First, every applicant must have an assigned recruiter, and both the applicant and the recruiter must sign a form (previously called USMEPCOM Form 714A) to take an enlistment ASVAB test. According to Army Regulation 601-270 (1999, 27):

Applicants desiring to take the enlistment ASVAB will be required to provide photographic identification, e.g., drivers license, student identification card, military dependent card, passport, etc., to the test administrator (TA) prior to testing. Those individuals without such identification will be required to have their right thumb print imprinted on the USMEPCOM 714A. Applicants without a photograph identification and who refuse to be thumb printed will be denied the opportunity to test. In any case, during the course of processing, the applicant signatures will be compared to ensure proper applicant identifications.

Why does DoD have such strict regulations on enlistment testing, but seemingly far less concern for the authenticity of student tests? This is another question difficult to answer. It is even more disconcerting after reading Army Regulation 601-222 (1994, 9-1), which states:

Each individual who takes either the student or enlistment ASVAB must be considered a potential accession. Inaccurate test scores may result in improper, illegal, or unlawful training, classification, assignment to training, or other

personnel action detrimental to the individual or the military service.

5. How to Measure the Effectiveness of the ASVAB-CEP?

No goals or objectives have been developed to measure the effectiveness of the ASVAB-CEP. DoD Directive 1304.12 (1993, 4) states that one purpose of the program is to "gain access to the high-quality high school market for recruiters." Does a school penetration of 56.8 percent achieve that purpose? Additionally, as Laurence and Ramsberger (1999, 7-8) conclude: "We can attribute about 4.9 percent of Army FY 1999 high-quality enlistments to student and high school participation." High-quality enlistments are defined as students who graduate from high school and have an Armed Forces Qualification Test (AFQT) score of 50 or above. The AFQT is a composite of four of the eight sub-tests on the ASVAB: Arithmetic Reasoning, Paragraph Comprehension, Word Knowledge, and Mathematics Knowledge. Therefore, two Math and two English tests determine if a student is eligible to enlist in the United States military. Table 3 describes how AFQT scores are distributed according to categories and the estimated proportion of the youth population within each category.



Table 3. Armed Forces Qualification Test (AFQT) Categories by Corresponding Percentile Score Ranges and Percent of Civilian Youth Population.

AFQT Category	Percentile Score Range	Percent of Civilian Youth
I	93-100	8
II	65-92	28
IIIA	50-64	15
IIIB	31-49	19
IV	10-30	21
V	1-9	9

Source: *Predicting Readiness for Military Service* (Sellman 2004, 6).

The "ASVAB is normed against a nationally representative sample of young people ages 18 to 23 years old who tested in 1997 as part of the Bureau of Labor Statistics' National Longitudinal Survey of Youth" (Sellman 2004, 3). Is 4.9 percent of high-quality Army enlistments out of 51 percent (CAT I-IIIA) of civilian youth acceptable? Under the ASVAB-CEP, no goals are set for actual recruits, the number of leads, the number of post-test interpretations, or school penetration, to name a few measures of possible effectiveness. How, then, can one determine the effectiveness of the ASVAB-CEP?

#### D. CHAPTER SUMMARY

For over 30 years, the ASVAB-CEP and its predecessors have been a very effective source of leads for military recruiting. Historically, almost 1 in 5 enlistees joins the military by taking the high school ASVAB. However, the number of ASVAB tests administered in high schools has been declining from 1998 through 2004, lowering the number of leads available to recruiters. This has resulted in a smaller number of recruits from the program over the same period. Furthermore, fewer schools are taking advantage of the no-cost ASVAB-CEP, resulting in a lower school

penetration. This is happening in spite of numerous studies that show ASVAB scores are valid and reliable, along with even more state-of-the-art supporting materials for high school students and their counselors.

The ASVAB-CEP has been criticized for a number of reasons. First, some people think it is deceptive, being "sold" by civilians as a career-counseling tool for students, but used by the recruiting services for qualified leads to enlist students in the military. Students and parents have no say in their school's decision to release personal information and ASVAB scores to the military services. Second, some critics feel that ASVAB scores are not predictive for civilian job selection and performance. Third, the heart of the ASVAB-CEP is the post-test interpretation of the students' ASVAB scores for career-counseling. However, no process ensures that this happens. Fourth, it is relatively easy for a student to cheat by having someone else take the student ASVAB. Two students could conspire to take the test for one another, and it would never be discovered. They could easily enlist on invalid scores, possibly resulting in higher attrition and reclassification rates at recruit training centers. Fifth, the ASVAB-CEP has no goals or objectives. No true measures of effectiveness are applied to determine if the program is fulfilling its purpose. As Maier (1993, 56) concludes: "The STP continues in existence because recruiting commands want the leads obtained from the students who take the ASVAB." But what do recruiters think of this?

### III. APPROACH

#### A. INTRODUCTION

The Human Resources Research Organization (HumRRO) published a report on the Evaluation of the DoD Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) Career Exploration Program (CEP) in October 1999. HumRRO's report serves as the qualitative foundation for the present study. This report, which is now over five years old, surveyed a sample of one thousand recruiters from the combined recruiting services, receiving 427 responses on the ASVAB-CEP. The present study also uses a survey, and some of the same questions as in the HumRRO survey.

The literature review draws largely from a few select sources: HumRRO's 1999 report, a June 1993 DMDC report on Military Aptitude Testing: The Past Fifty Years, governmental Websites, and articles found on the Internet. No other research was found that relates directly to the ASVAB STP or CEP.

#### B. DATA AND SURVEY

All testing data were provided by MEPCOM, to include the junior and senior student population, the number of junior and seniors tested, the number of recruiter leads (AFQT scores greater than 30), total number of high schools, number of high schools tested, and the high school penetration rate. For the purposes of this study, the number of high school sophomores was not used, since the ASVAB scores of these students cannot be used for enlistment. Additionally, MEPCOM provided information on the number of persons who qualified for enlistment with a

high school ASVAB. Further, the numbers of enlisted recruits for the years 1974-2004 were found on a military Website.

As noted, the survey questions in (Appendix A) were heavily based on HumRRO's questions from its 1999 study on the ASVAB-CEP. After some revision, the updated questions were sent to the appropriate authorities at the Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) and Commander, Navy Recruiting Command (CNRC) for approval. Upon approval, they were transferred to Zoomerang, an online survey tool. Zoomerang is "an easy to use, Internet-based survey tool allowing customers to design and send surveys and analyze the results in real time" (Market Tools, Inc. 2005). CNRC provided email addresses for all 1,296 Navy Recruiters-in-Charge (RINCs) of recruiting stations under its command to participate in the survey.

The updated online ASVAB-CEP survey for this study resulted in 438 responses from the 1,296 RINCs. Of these responses, 152 provided comments on the ASVAB-CEP. The many comments, some in-depth, help provide a qualitative analysis of recruiter attitudes. This is especially important since the military recruiter is a major stakeholder in the ASVAB-CEP. Additionally, the Navy RINCs are in charge of recruiting stations and are typically more senior petty officers (E-6s and E-7s). Therefore, they are usually the more experienced recruiters and responsible for the mission and training of other recruiters in their respective stations.

The survey was sent to the RINCs by email on 17 December 2004; the survey closed on 22 January 2005,

providing 36 days to respond. The survey contained 17 questions, with the final question being open-ended, requesting voluntary comments on the ASVAB-CEP.

#### C. SAMPLE DESCRIPTION

Of the 1,296 RINCs contacted, 438 completed the survey for a response rate of 34 percent. A total of 21 percent of the RINCs responded to being members of the Career Recruiter Force (CRF), while about 79 percent were on a typical 3-year recruiting tour of duty. Members of the CRF are recruiters who have selected recruiting as their primary job in the Navy. They are career Navy recruiters who typically have many years of recruiting experience and hold supervisory positions, such as RINCs or Zone Supervisors.

The RINCs were sent a request via email asking them to click on the Zoomerang Website to complete the survey. Additionally, 152 of the 438 (35 percent) who responded also provided comments to the open-ended question at the conclusion of the survey. The open-ended question asked: "Please comment on any recommendations/changes/experiences/ highlights you may have for the ASVAB Student Testing Career Exploration Program (CEP)."

This survey response rate was deemed satisfactory, given previous experience with this population and type of survey. Recruiters are extremely busy, and do not have the best reputation for taking time to fill out surveys. Furthermore, the results are believed to show a valid "snapshot" of the recruiting environment across the nation. Tables 4 and 5 show the regions and areas, respectively, of the recruiters who responded.

Table 4. Number and Percentage Distribution of Recruiters-in-Charge Who Responded to the Survey by Region

Region	Number of Responses	Percent
Northeast	64	15
Mid-Atlantic	23	5
Southeast	87	20
North Central	77	18
South Central	73	17
West	59	13
Pacific	<u>54</u>	<u>12</u>
Total	437	100

Source: Question number 13 of 2005 ASVAB STP survey.

Table 5. Number and Percentage Distribution of Recruiters-in-Charge Who Responded to the Survey by Urban/Rural Area

Area	Number of Responses	Percent
Rural	189	43
Urban	236	54
Not Sure	<u>11</u>	<u>3</u>
Total	436	100

Source: Question number 14 of 2005 ASVAB STP survey.

The Mid-Atlantic Region is not well represented, but shows almost the same proportion of responses as in HumRRO's 1999 recruiter survey (5.2 percent). In fact, the percentages for all regions closely mirror those in HumRRO's report. Additionally, HumRRO's 1999 recruiter survey was provided to all of the recruiting services, with almost the same number (427) of responses.

#### IV. RECRUITER SURVEY ON THE ASVAB-CEP

##### A. INTRODUCTION

The leads generated from the ASVAB-CEP are arguably the most important aspect of the program and an essential tool for military recruiters. As previously noted, from its origin in 1968, the ASVAB's main purpose was to provide leads to the recruiting services. Military recruiters have been at the forefront of the ASVAB-CEP, attempting to schedule schools to test, serving as proctors, conducting post-test interpretations, and encouraging students from the ASVAB rosters to join the military. Recruiters are among the most important stakeholders for the ASVAB-CEP. According to Laurence and Ramsberger (1999, 6-1):

Since the advent of the All-Volunteer Force, military recruiters have been vital to maintaining force readiness. It is their job to ensure that sufficient numbers of high-quality youth are brought into service to fill the critical jobs that must be performed in our nation's defense. Congress has given recruiters a variety of tools in this regard, including educational benefits, enlistment bonuses, and other incentives to serve. The Career Exploration Program (CEP) is one such tool in that it provides recruiters with an avenue to reach young people. Schools that choose to participate in the program receive a valuable career-counseling package at no cost, while recruiters are given access (with permission) to students who take the ASVAB and whose scores indicate eligibility to enlist.

Therefore, the experience, attitudes and opinions of military recruiters regarding the ASVAB-CEP should provide sound judgment on the program's effectiveness. A survey was consequently developed for a select group of Navy

recruiters to collect information about the program. Eight common themes were derived from the survey and are discussed separately below. Additionally, a personal interview was conducted with an Army recruiter in Monterey, California and is discussed at the end of the chapter. Appendix A contains a copy of the survey questions. Appendix B shows the survey results, and Appendix C presents recruiters' comments in response to the survey's only open-ended question.

## B. RESULTS - EIGHT COMMON THEMES

### 1. Theme 1: Important Recruiting Tool

From their open-ended comments, a great majority of RINCs feel the ASVAB-CEP is an important and effective recruiting tool. The program provides the recruiters with a list of students (leads) who have pre-qualified ASVAB scores. Therefore, the recruiters will not have to retest the students at a MEPS or MET site for them to qualify in this way for military service. This saves the recruiter valuable time, especially recruiters who operate in rural areas. Otherwise, the recruiter may have to transport applicants to a MEPS to take the ASVAB or drive many miles to test at a MET site. Time is quite valuable in recruiting, and the ASVAB-CEP saves time. Additionally, the ASVAB-CEP provides a recruiter with an abundance of personal information on students, again saving valuable time in "blueprinting" certain applicants for processing.

The ASVAB-CEP allows recruiters the opportunity to project a military presence with a professional image to students and school officials. Students may observe a sharp-looking recruiter, which in turn influences a student to join the military. However, the most important tool,



and purpose of the ASVAB-CEP, is the leads it generates for possible enlistments. Table 6 shows the results of recruiter responses to questions on leads and the effectiveness of the ASVAB-CEP.

Table 6. Recruiters' Opinions on the Recruiting Effectiveness of the ASVAB-CEP

Survey Question	Percent who Strongly Agree/Agree
The High School ASVAB is a valuable source of leads for my recruiting station.	87
The High School ASVAB increases my recruiter access to schools.	64
If the High School ASVAB were discontinued, my recruiting efforts would suffer.	66
Without the High School ASVAB, my station could probably not make mission/goal.	23
If I receive a High School List/Student Directory from a particular High School, it is still important to administer the High School ASVAB at that school.	82

Source: Questions 2, 4, 5, 6, & 7 of 2005 ASVAB STP survey.

Almost nine out of ten recruiters (87 percent) felt that the ASVAB-CEP is a valuable source of leads. Similarly, 82 percent would still want the program administered even if they received student lists or directories with student contact information from the high schools. A total of 66 percent felt that their recruiting

efforts would suffer without the ASVAB-CEP, and 64 percent felt the program increases their access to high schools. About a quarter (23 percent) of the RINCs felt they would not make mission without the program.

The leads from the high school ASVAB are only one tool that recruiters use to contact applicants. Many use a High School List or Student Directory for recruiting students. Before the enactment of the No Child Left Behind Act in 2001, high schools were not required to supply recruiters with these lists. However, this Act now specifies that high schools provide the same information to military recruiters that they give to colleges and universities or risk losing federal aid. Recruiters no longer have to rely so heavily on ASVAB lists, which may only have a few names. As one Navy RINC stated in the survey:

The county that we are in tests all high school seniors. However, I don't think it's necessary. It often takes more time to process people with prior high school ASVAB test scores. Anybody that wants to join the military will be more than willing to take the ASVAB at MEPS, thus making high school ASVABs redundant - especially now that all high schools give us name lists. (Number 28 of survey question 17)

Responses to survey question 10 also support this reasoning. A total of 89 percent of the Navy RINCs who receive student lists or directories from a high school would rather take their applicant to a MEPS or MET site to test immediately, than wait for a high school ASVAB.

## 2. Theme 2: Make Test Mandatory

A number of Navy RINCs (about 22 in survey) would like to see their high schools test more students. A good way to do this would be to make the test mandatory for all

juniors, seniors, or both. More ASVABs generate more leads, which ultimately result in more contracts. Additionally, if the high schools test twice a year, instead of only once, the result could be twice the leads. Further, students may improve their scores without having to take an enlistment test at the MEPS or MET site.

### 3. Theme 3: No Testing Sophomores

No issue was more hotly debated than the current DoD policy of allowing sophomores to take the high school ASVAB. Only 16 percent of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that testing high school sophomores benefited their recruiting station. Many recruiters see absolutely no point in testing sophomores in high school. As one recruiter observed:

I like the ASVAB tests in the schools. My concern is in the testing of 10Ms (sophomores). It does nothing to gauge where they are. Their score will not be valid for enlistment purposes and from what I have witnessed (at least 5 different tests of that level) the kids are blowing the test off. This is a waste of man-hours and should be discontinued immediately. (Number 104 of survey question 17)

According to Sellman (2004, 3), the "ASVAB is normed against a nationally representative sample of young people ages 18 to 23 years old." Does it then make sense to test 15-16 year old students? In an attempt to gain access to a previously non-ASVAB testing school, an ESS might entice the school to test sophomores and then test them again as seniors to see how they have progressed. This attempt to sell the program as a career-counseling tool is not always successful. No matter, it still does not sit well with military recruiters who see no immediate return on their

investment of time and effort. In 2004, 70,399 high school sophomores completed the high school ASVAB. Since there is a requirement of one recruiter for every 40 students tested, an estimated 1,760 cases were required for recruiters to serve as proctors for those tests. With a minimum test time of three hours, not including travel time, recruiters spent well over 5,280 hours proctoring ASVAB examinations for high school sophomores. For their efforts, they received no leads. Test scores for sophomores are not valid for enlistment purposes.

#### 4. Theme 4: Proctoring Value Questioned

Survey results indicate that recruiters have varying opinions about proctoring high school ASVABs. Recruiters who recruit out of urban recruiting stations normally have high schools assigned to them that are within a thirty-minute drive. However, rural-station recruiters may have to drive hundreds of miles to visit a high school within their area of responsibility. This requires many "windshield" hours behind the wheel and substantially decreases the amount of time the recruiter can apply to other activities.

In addition to mandatory school visits, recruiters are also required to serve as proctors for all high school ASVABs. As stated previously, DoD requires one proctor for every 40 students. If this ratio is not met, the OPM TA may cancel the test before it starts or code it Option 7 (scores invalid for enlistment) afterwards. Furthermore, the TA does not count as a proctor. However, the TA may count as a proctor for testing fewer than 25 students, if the MEPS Commanding Officer waives the 40:1 ratio beforehand.

Survey results indicate that 47 percent of the RINCs strongly agreed or agreed that proctoring high school ASVABs was a productive use of their time. However, 53 percent strongly disagreed, disagreed, or remained neutral. This nearly even split corresponds to the geography of the RINCs surveyed; that is, 54 percent indicated they were from an urban recruiting station, while 43 percent came from a rural station.

If a rural-station recruiter is traveling hundreds of miles to proctor a test for 30 students and the school decides not to release the scores to the recruiting services, then that rural recruiter will obviously not have a positive view about proctoring tests. To that recruiter, it is an entire day wasted. Indeed, as one RINC in a 2-person rural-station comments:

I don't get any benefit by proctoring these tests. In some cases I will travel more than 450 miles to proctor a test for less than 30 students. This puts a major drain on manpower during testing months. I wish we could continue it but find another option for proctors in our rural areas where a small station has so many schools and so many miles to go. (Number 68 of survey question 17)

Another recruiter adds:

My station only has two people and we have 27 high schools and 3 Vo Techs and over half of these are an hour to two hours away. And when we are testing 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade students it is a complete waste of time. Testing is not all bad, but maybe hiring more civilian personnel to proctor would be better. (Number 74 of survey question 17)

In 2004, 651,065 juniors and seniors completed the high school ASVAB. With one recruiter proctoring for every

40 students, an estimated 16,277 sessions of recruiter proctoring were needed. Considering the ASVAB test takes three hours to administer (not including travel time), recruiters spent well over 48,831 hours proctoring high school ASVABs for juniors and seniors. For their efforts, they received 431,705 qualified leads, which resulted in 25,791 accessions (6 percent of leads). Could the recruiters have used those 48,831 hours to actively work back in the office and generate more than 25,791 accessions? This is a question the recruiting services must ponder.

#### 5. Theme 5: Students Not Serious

A number of recruiters indicate in their comments that many students only take the ASVAB to get out of class. The students reportedly do not take the testing seriously, and if they want to join the military later, they often take the test again at a MEPS, where they score higher. One recruiter comments:

I have been in recruiting for 5 years now, and my experience thus far at high schools administering ASVABs has been less than favorable. I have seen and heard the kids say they are only taking the test to get out of class, or to see their boyfriend/girlfriend. (Number 41 of survey question 17)

If a majority of students are not taking the test seriously, then the program could be viewed as a waste of time. Certain students will always try their best, although that is not always the case. Consider the comments of a student who wrote an article titled, "ASVAB

Tests Serve No Functional Purpose" (Great Falls High School Iniwa Newspaper, 2005) for his high school newspaper in Montana:

ASVAB tests are seldom successful in anything other than allowing the junior class to miss half a day of school.

Although students are only out of the classroom for half a day, two full days of school are actually hampered because a majority of teachers do not want to proceed with their lesson plans with half of their class gone.

A majority of students see no reason to apply themselves to the test and just fill in random answers.

Many students enjoy being able to miss class and read a novel or a magazine.

The ASVAB test more or less is used to give the Army a phone book of student names that they can call to persuade them to join the armed forces.

It may be argued that the ASVABs are used to help students decide appropriate career fields. However, it is extremely unlikely that a student will find his or her life's calling from an afternoon spent taking a standardized test, let alone the ASVAB.

Mandatory ASVAB testing wastes school time and resources.

Two school days are ripped apart (half the juniors test one day, the other half the next day) so students can take a test that a majority do not even take seriously.

A recruiter from the survey comments:

[The test is} typically a waste of time. Most students tend to take the test just to miss class. (Number 54 of survey question 17)

If the schools take advantage of the post-test interpretation to explain how the ASVAB scores relate to civilian occupations, then more time must be scheduled for this career-counseling tool weeks after the test. The recruiting services, MEPS, and high schools do not place

enough emphasis on the importance of post-test interpretations. Is this because the students do not care?

#### 6. Theme 6: Interpretations Are Important

ASVAB post-test interpretations are the heart of the ASVAB-CEP. If the interpretations are not being performed after the ASVAB results are released, then students lose a career-counseling tool that explains how their test scores relate to military and civilian occupations. The only other main purposes of the test would then be to provide military recruiters with student leads for possible enlistment and access or visibility in the schools. Recruiters recognize the importance of the interpretations. It gives them another opportunity to gain access to the schools. Almost half of the recruiters surveyed (49 percent) had personally conducted an ASVAB post-test interpretation at a high school, although 66 percent indicated that they had never been trained to do so. One recruiter comments:

Post examination interpretation of test results should be a MANDATORY portion of the testing program. Dates and times should be planned by the school counselor or POC for the exam, and should be disseminated to the students taking the exam PRIOR to the exam date. A pattern of poor attendance for the interpretation at a school should be basis for discontinuance of the program at that school.

Another recruiter observes:

As a recruiter I have never received any type of training on interpreting ASVAB results. The common practice in the NRD is to have the Ed Spec do this. However, being in a rural/remote station, it is almost impossible to have the Ed Spec take the time to come out to the schools with us to interpret the scores. As a result, we



have had many schools refuse or simply drop the ASVAB program.

Education Specialists (or Ed Specs) work in the Navy Recruiting Districts. Likewise, Army recruiting battalions also have ESSs like the MEPS who help sell the ASVAB-CEP to the high schools. With so many high schools spread over so many miles and so many separate ASVABs, however, it is virtually impossible for Ed Specs and ESSs to conduct all post-test interpretations. This is why specialists should train recruiters and counselors to also perform the interpretations. But the question remains, who has the time, including the high schools, to coordinate and ensure that the interpretations are performed for the students?

#### 7. Theme 7: Information Not Released.

While the post-test interpretations are the heart of the ASVAB-CEP for students, the test score results and personal information on students are the lifeblood of the program for military recruiters. A recruiter is forbidden to actively recruit students during an ASVAB. After the test is completed, the recruiter may or may not ever receive the test results, depending on which release option (see Table 2) the school selects. As a recruiter points out:

Schools should not be given the option to release ASVAB scores. I have numerous schools where we give the test, but the scores are never released. It turns into a big waste of time. (Number 72 of survey question 17)

If schools do not elect to release the student scores to military recruiters, do they at least conduct post-test interpretations for the students? Otherwise, what is the purpose of having the program? Another recruiter states:

While the ASVAB is good, because I have schools that test the entire class, I also have schools that have 450 seniors and only 25 get tested. Another problem is some of the guidance teachers tell students (I have heard this in person) not to put phone numbers and addresses. Just put your first initial and last name so those recruiters don't call you. (Number 50 of survey question 17)

A number of high schools have officials who harbor anti-military sentiments. Fewer and fewer school officials (counselors and teachers), coaches, parents, siblings, and friends of students have served in the military. Therefore, students tend to have fewer "role models" in the general society who might influence them to consider joining the military. Gaining the release of student personal information to military recruiters is becoming more and more of a challenge, especially in the shadows of a controversial war.

#### 8. Theme 8: Poor School Cooperation

In 2004, 12,598 high schools tested (56.8 percent school penetration) with the ASVAB-CEP. This was the lowest number of schools tested in the previous seven years, and down from 13,427 schools tested (61.6 percent school penetration) in 1998. Further, in 2004, 651,065 juniors and seniors were administered the ASVAB test, down from 764,973 in 1998. Recruiters are finding it more difficult to obtain qualified leads from the ASVAB-CEP. As one recruiter observes:

I currently have one high school (a private high school) out of 21 that participate in ASVAB high school testing. I firmly believe if we had more schools involved, we would have much more success.

It is no easy task selling the ASVAB-CEP to high schools. The program has to compete with other standardized tests at the schools, as well as time, resources, and the attitudes of counselors, students, and parents, to name a few. High schools typically tell their students to take the test if they are interested in the military, and it is not used as a career-counseling tool. Many schools make the test optional, having the students sign up voluntarily. In these cases, most of the students who take the test are already leaning toward joining the military. A recruiter comments on the matter of mandatory testing:

ASVAB testing should be mandatory for all juniors and seniors. Not all schools enforce this issue, making it optional. Therefore, there is not a good turn out.

Likewise, still another recruiter states:

Many of our schools make the ASVAB optional for seniors. If you make anything optional for a 17 or 18 year old, especially a test, you might as well forget it.

Only 14 percent of recruiters surveyed considered their recruiting area very "anti-military" or "somewhat anti-military." Then, why are schools and students not taking advantage of a free, state-of-the-art career-counseling tool, such as the ASVAB-CEP? High schools, and especially those in affluent neighborhoods, promote college to their students. The recruiters and ASVAB-CEP are often competing against a prevailing attitude that the majority of high school students should be headed for college immediately after graduating. If high school officials allow ASVAB testing, then some of their students may join

the military instead of attending college; in their mind, this would contradict the mission of high schools, to prepare students for college. Additionally, parents in more affluent neighborhoods have the money to send their children to college, no matter if they are prepared or not. The thought of a "military test" in high school, to tempt students away from college and into the Armed Forces, does not sit well with some parents, teachers, and school officials.

#### C. PERSONAL INTERVIEW

A personal interview concerning the ASVAB-CEP was conducted with the acting Army recruiting station commander in Monterey, California on 14 February 2005. The Army recruiter had been on recruiting duty in the area for 18 months. During that time, he stated his station had only contracted 2 students with high school ASVAB scores out of about 50 total contracts. Most schools will not test with the ASVAB-CEP. In fact, only 3 schools out of 10 assigned to the Monterey, California recruiting office take the test. Carmel High School, where a relatively large proportion of graduates go on to college, takes advantage of the program. Carmel High School also requests a post-test interpretation of test scores for its students. However, the Army recruiter said his station had not been trained in conducting the interpretations, and they did a relatively poor job for the school.

Seaside High School (in Monterey County) also started testing in 2005. However, the scheduling of the first test did not go well. The Army recruiter said the school announced over the loud speaker, "anyone interested in a

career in the military" should sign up for the ASVAB. One student signed up. After rewording the announcement some time later, more students took the test.

Monterey High School, only minutes from the local recruiting station, was scheduled to test in early March 2005. However, only six students signed up to take the test, prompting the local MEPS to cancel the session.

The Army recruiter was quick to point out that, even though the Army does not enlist many students out of Carmel High School through the ASVAB-CEP, it does wind up recruiting some students when they depart early from college. He also stated the testing of sophomores was "horrible."

From this short interview (and just one case), we can still relate the findings to those of the Navy RINC survey:

- (1) The ASVAB CEP is an important recruiting tool. It may plant a "seed" in college dropouts to join the military.
- (2) Recruiters feel testing high school sophomores is a waste of time.
- (3) ASVAB post-test interpretations are important. Recruiters need training on how to complete them.
- (4) High school participation in ASVAB-CEP can be spotty and relatively poor, especially in affluent areas.

#### D. CHAPTER SUMMARY

The ASVAB-CEP remains a very important tool for recruiters. When used properly, it saves recruiters valuable time in contacting potential applicants for military service. It may also plant a "seed" in prospective applicants who leave college and then join the military shortly thereafter. Nine out of ten recruiters

who responded to the survey felt that the ASVAB-CEP is a valuable source of leads. The recruiters would like to see more schools take advantage of the program. If that were the case, then more leads would be generated, resulting in more enlistments.

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 has opened some previously closed doors for recruiters. High schools must now provide military recruiters with the same school lists that they offer to colleges, or risk losing federal aid. This is another major source of leads for recruiters and has reduced the pressure of depending on ASVAB results for leads. About a quarter of the survey respondents felt they would not make mission or goal without the ASVAB-CEP.

The majority of recruiters felt that sophomores should not be administered the high school ASVAB. The scores of sophomores are not valid for enlistment, and recruiters believe that they waste precious time proctoring these tests. Only 16 percent of recruiters surveyed felt testing sophomores benefits their recruiting station.

Nearly half of the respondents indicated that they would rather not proctor any high school ASVAB tests, including tests for sophomores, juniors, or seniors. This sentiment was more common among recruiters from rural areas, who may travel hours to proctor a test, then have the school select a release option that denies access to the students' test scores and personal information. The high school can still use the test as a career-counseling tool, but the recruiters receive no immediate return from the test. To recruiters, this is another major waste of time. One of those tests could shut down a recruiting

station for almost an entire day. Furthermore, military recruiters combined are spending over 54,111 (5,280 for sophomores and 48,831 for juniors and seniors) hours per year proctoring high school ASVABs. Some of these recruiters could be more productive if they used the time to find and encourage applicants on their own.

Apparently, a number of students who take the high school ASVAB are only doing so to get out of class. Their scores may not reflect their true ability. This does not help the recruiting services or the students. It defeats the two primary purposes of the ASVAB-CEP, to provide qualified leads to the recruiting services and serve as a career-counseling tool for the student. Additionally, most schools make the test optional, which lowers testing numbers. Here lies a problem for the military services. If the test is made mandatory, the students may not put forth their best efforts; if the test is optional, testing numbers are drastically lower.

At the heart of the ASVAB-CEP is the post-test interpretation. If the post-test interpretation is not completed, students will not understand how their scores relate to military and civilian occupations. Two-thirds of the recruiters surveyed indicated that they had not been trained on how to conduct an ASVAB post-test interpretation. Even though it is not their main responsibility, knowing how to perform interpretations would greatly benefit the program. Education Service Specialists have too many high schools to conduct all of

the interpretations alone. Then again, it is often difficult for a recruiter to find the time to perform the interpretations.

Some confusion is found between the recruiters and ESSs on how the ASVAB-CEP should be marketed to the high schools. Of the 152 comments provided on the survey, only two recruiters specifically mentioned anything about career-counseling for students. Understandably, the recruiters are concerned about the potential leads generated from the program. However, the civilian ESSs are going to the schools and selling the program as a career-counseling tool. Because the high schools control the release options of test results, scheduling of ASVABs and post-test interpretations, and the number of students tested, military recruiters are often frustrated and see much of their valuable time lost. This is especially true with the testing of sophomores and when high schools do not release student test scores to military recruiters. For the ASVAB-CEP to be a truly effective recruiting tool, military recruiters must depend on supportive participation from the high schools, which generates quality leads, resulting in a high percentage of military accessions.



## V. ASVAB CEP PARTICIPATION, LEADS, AND RECRUITS

### A. INTRODUCTION

The ASVAB-CEP has no established goals to effectively measure outcomes and objectives. Therefore, DoD has no means to determine accountability for outcomes or demonstrate the program is indeed beneficial. In examining the program from the perspective of a recruiter, for it to be successful, the high schools must test an adequate amount of students to generate qualified leads for enlistment. But what is an adequate number of students, leads, and resulting recruits?

As previously seen from the survey results, recruiters feel strongly that the ASVAB-CEP is a valuable recruiting tool. However, the value of the program as a recruiting tool may deteriorate if high school participation continues its seven-year downward trend of testing fewer students in a decreasing number of schools. The numbers of students tested in the schools may have a significant effect on the number of enlistments for some recruiting stations.

Recruiters are most interested in the leads generated from the ASVAB-CEP. The ultimate mission of any recruiter is to find and enlist as many young men and women as possible for their respective service. Mission success depends on a variety of leads, but ASVAB-CEP leads are even more important to a recruiter's success because the applicant, if a high school senior, can use his or her test results to qualify for enlistment. Therefore, it would seem useful to establish a benchmark for the number of ASVAB-CEP leads to determine if the program is meeting

expectations. In 2004, the recruiting services received 431,705 leads from the ASVAB-CEP, the lowest number of leads from the program over the past seven years.

As previously noted, in 2004, the recruiting services enlisted about 6 percent of 431,705 leads, resulting in 25,791 accessions. From 1998 to 2004, an average of 16 percent of all military accessions entered one of the services with a high school ASVAB score. Thus, almost 1 in every 6 accessions came from the ASVAB-CEP. However, in 2004, the proportion was 14 percent (1 in every 7 accessions), down from 18 percent in 1998.

#### B. HIGH SCHOOL PARTICIPATION

One way to measure the effectiveness of a program is to examine its participation rate. As seen in Table 7, from 1998 through 2004 the numbers of sophomores, juniors, and seniors tested with the high school ASVAB have decreased.

Table 7. By the Numbers: Selected Data on ASVAB Student Testing, Leads, and Recruits, 1998-2004

	SY 1998	SY 1999	SY 2000	SY 2001	SY 2002	SY 2003	SY 2004
Recruits from HS tests	33,703	32,605	33,286	31,954	28,471	28,004	25,791
Jr/Sr Population	5,976,545	6,074,116	6,095,421	6,107,958	6,226,387	6,293,625	6,376,912
Jr/Sr Tested	764,973	948,825	727,316	700,207	693,615	678,756	651,065
Recruiter Leads (AFQT score > 30)	467,064	459,523	456,359	441,574	444,193	448,138	431,705
Sophomores Tested	128,230	106,987	98,263	90,442	84,262	76,759	70,399
Others Tested	1,672	1,819	1,378	1,757	1,720	1,138	985
Total Schools	21,766	21,917	21,934	21,989	22,157	22,249	22,174
Schools Tested	13,427	13,106	13,032	12,790	12,692	12,612	12,598
School Penetration	61.6%	59.7%	59.4%	58.1%	57.2%	56.7%	56.8%

Source: Mr. Don Hill, USMEPCOM data files, January 2005.

"Others Tested" are post-secondary students, which includes community college students.

"SY" is School Year.

The combined junior/senior population in the United States and its territories has increased by 400,367 (5,976,545 to 6,376,912) from 1998 to 2004. At the same time, the number of juniors and seniors tested through ASVAB-CEP has decreased by 113,908 (764,973 to 651,065). As seen in Table 8, MEPCOM now tests only 10 percent of the entire junior/senior population. Further, the number of sophomores tested has decreased by 57,831 (128,230 to 70,399). As stated previously, ASVAB testing of high school sophomores is not a priority of the recruiting services, since their scores cannot be used for enlistment. This particular trend may be due to the combined efforts of the recruiting services and MEPCOM to purposely limit the number of sophomores tested.

Table 8. Number and Percent of Juniors/Seniors Tested with  
ASVAB-CEP, 1998-2004

<u>School Year</u>	<u>Number Jr/Srs Tested</u>	<u>Jr/Sr Population</u>	<u>Percent Tested</u>
1998	764,973	5,976,545	12.8
1999	948,825	6,074,116	15.6
2000	727,316	6,095,421	11.9
2001	700,207	6,107,958	11.5
2002	693,615	6,226,387	11.1
2003	678,756	6,293,625	10.8
2004	651,065	6,376,912	10.2

Source: Mr. Don Hill, USMEPCOM data files, January 2005.

Fewer high schools are taking advantage of the no-cost ASVAB-CEP. In 2004, 829 fewer high schools have participated in the program than in 1998, decreasing the school penetration rate from 61.6 percent (1998) to 56.8 percent (2004). The numbers indicate that a significant percentage of high schools deny the administration of the ASVAB-CEP in their institutions. Possible reasons for the resistance may include the following:

- ASVAB test time constraints (see Table 1)
- High schools have other standardized tests
- Not as many military influencers (teachers, counselors, coaches, etc.) with prior military service in the schools
- War in Iraq
- Negative attitude toward military in some schools
- Schools promote college; military is a low priority

#### C. RECRUITING SERVICE LEADS

No goals are established to measure the number of leads generated by the ASVAB-CEP for the recruiting services. Are 431,705 leads in 2004 a fair amount for the

time and money spent on the program? As mentioned above, MEPCOM tests only 10 percent of the nation's junior and senior population. Table 9 shows the percentage of the nation's junior and senior population from 1998 through 2004 that are considered leads through the ASVAB-CEP. As seen here in 2004, the recruiting services received leads from 6.8 percent of the entire junior and senior population.

Table 9. Number and Percent of Junior/Senior Population Providing Leads through ASVAB-CEP, 1998-2004

<u>School Year</u>	<u>Number of Leads</u>	<u>Jr/Sr Population</u>	<u>Percent of Jr/Sr Pop.</u>
1998	467,064	5,976,545	7.8
1999	459,523	6,074,116	7.6
2000	456,359	6,095,421	7.5
2001	441,574	6,107,958	7.2
2002	444,193	6,226,387	7.1
2003	448,138	6,293,625	7.1
2004	431,705	6,376,912	6.8

Source: Mr. Don Hill, USMEPCOM data files, January 2005.

Even though only a small proportion of juniors and seniors take the high school ASVAB and qualify as leads, the recruiters still consider them very important. As previously noted in the recruiter survey, 87 percent of the RINCs indicated that the ASVAB-CEP is a valuable source of leads. For busy recruiters, receiving over 400,000 qualified test scores per year is considerably better than none at all.

#### D. RECRUITING SERVICE ACCESSIONS

The end result of the ASVAB-CEP in the eyes of the recruiting environment is how many leads actually *enlist* in the military. Again, there is no benchmark to determine

what number would be beneficial to the recruiting services. Table 10 shows the number of accessions (recruits) since 1998 who have joined the military through the ASVAB-CEP.

Table 10. Percent of Recruits Qualifying for Enlistment with a High School ASVAB Test Score, 1998-2004

<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Number of Recruits with H.S. Test</u>	<u>Total Number of DoD Recruits</u>	<u>Percent with H.S. Test</u>
1998	33,703	186,132	18.1
1999	32,605	187,180	17.4
2000	33,286	202,917	16.4
2001	31,954	196,355	16.3
2002	28,471	196,474	14.5
2003	28,004	184,879	15.2
2004	25,791	182,436	14.1

Source: <http://www.dod.mil/prhome/mpprecruiting.html> (January 2005)

As seen in Table 10, the recruiting services had 7,912 fewer recruits from the high school ASVAB in 2004 (25,791) than they did in 1998 (33,703). The war in Iraq and low unemployment may have contributed to the lower numbers, but the proportion of accessions enlisting with a high school ASVAB score has also been dropping over the past seven years. The one exception is 2003.

Likewise, the number of qualified leads who enlist has also been declining since 1998. Table 11 shows the percentage of leads who actually enlist.

Table 11. Percent of Qualified Leads Enlisting, 1998-2004

<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Number of Recruits with H.S. Test</u>	<u>Number of Leads</u>	<u>Percent of Recruits from Leads</u>
1998	33,703	467,064	7.2
1999	32,605	459,523	7.1
2000	33,286	456,359	7.3
2001	31,954	441,574	7.2
2002	28,471	444,193	6.4
2003	28,004	448,138	6.3
2004	25,791	431,705	6.0

Source: Mr. Don Hill, USMEPCOM data files, January 2005.

As seen in Table 11, the proportion of leads enlisting from the ASVAB-CEP decreased from 7.2 percent in 1998 to about 6 percent in 2004. However, it is important to note that 6 percent of leads still account for 25,791 recruits, young men and women who may or may not have joined the military without the ASVAB-CEP. As Eitelberg et al. (1982,23) state:

It would be difficult to prove that all of the recruits who previously took the high school ASVAB enlisted in military service solely because of the High School Testing Program. Many of the accessions would have occurred without the program. Test takers who already planned to enter military service at the time they took the test constituted a significant percentage of the accessions.

Since DoD Directive 1304.12 (1993,4) states clearly that one of the purposes of the DoD STP is to "provide the military Services with access to the high-quality high school market for recruiters," this study obtained a sample of 2004 Navy accessions (enlistment and student tests combined) to examine high-quality contracts. The results are mixed. On the positive side, of 4,923 ASVAB-CEP accessions, 69 percent (3,415) were CAT-IIIA or above (so-termed "high-quality" recruits). However, the 3,415 high-quality ASVAB-CEP accessions only accounted for 8.6 percent of all Navy recruits in 2004. The majority (53 percent) of high-quality Navy accessions came from applicants testing at a MEPS with the CAT-ASVAB. MET site accessions accounted for another 8.4 percent of high-quality contracts.

Table 12 shows the three testing venues with the numbers of high-quality (score of AFQT 50 or above) and lower-quality (score between 31-49 on the AFQT) recruits associated with each.

Table 12. Navy Recruits by Test Venue and AFQT Category, 2004

AFQT Category	ASVAB Test Venue (Number Tested)			
	MEPS	MET Site	Student	Total
CAT-IIIA & Above	20,989	3,332	3,415	27,736
CAT-IIIB	7,643	2,733	1,508	11,884
Total	28,632	6,065	4,923	39,620

Source: Mr. John Noble, CNRC data files, February 2005.

AFQT is Armed Forces Qualification Test.

ASVAB is Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery.

MEPS is Military Entrance Processing Station.

MET is Mobile Examining Team.

"Student" is an ASVAB administered at a high school.

Table 13. Number and Percent of High-Quality Navy Recruits by Test Venue, 2004

ASVAB Test Venue	High-Quality Navy Recruits		All Navy Recruits	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
MEPS	20,989	53.0	28,632	72.3
MET	3,332	8.4	6,065	15.3
Student	3,415	8.6	4,923	12.4
Total	27,736	70.0	39,620	100.0

Source: Mr. John Noble, CNRC data files, February 2005.

ASVAB is Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery.

MEPS is Military Entrance Processing Station.

MET is Mobile Examining Team.

"Student" is an ASVAB administered at a high school.



Table 13 shows the percentages of high-quality recruits associated with each test venue. Two comparisons can be drawn from these numbers to previous findings. First, data from the Commander, Navy Recruiting Command (CNRC) indicate that 8.6 percent of all Navy high-quality recruits were gained through the ASVAB-CEP in 2004. These data seem to be accurate when considering HumRRO's 1999 study (4.9 percent of all Army high-quality recruits came through the ASVAB-CEP) (Laurence and Ramsberger 1999). The Navy is more technical than the Army. Also, the Navy's minimum AFQT score to enlist is 35, compared with 31 for the Army. Second, the CNRC data indicate 12.4 percent (4,923 out of 39,620) of Navy recruits joined through the ASVAB-CEP in 2004. Again, this closely mirrors MEPCOM's data showing that 14.1 percent of all military recruits in 2004 came from the ASVAB-CEP.

#### E. CHAPTER SUMMARY

The ASVAB-CEP experienced a downward trend in participation from 1998 through 2004. Over 800 fewer schools used the program in 2004 than in 1998. The school penetration rate dropped from 61.6 percent (1998) to 56.8 percent (2004), as school participation fell. The number of juniors and seniors tested declined by over 100,000 students. In 2004, MEPCOM tested 10 percent of the entire junior and senior population, contributing to a decline in recruiter leads for the recruiting services. Of these recruiter leads, about 6 percent enlisted. However, that 6 percent (25,791 recruits) accounted for 14 percent of all DoD recruits in 2004. Therefore, an estimated 1 in 7 recruits came from the ASVAB-CEP. Historically, the number

has been closer to 1 in 5 recruits, but the downward trend has had a significant effect on recruiting.

According to the 2004 Navy data, 69 percent of Navy recruits scored at or above 50 on the AFQT with the ASVAB-CEP. Further investigation reveals that the ASVAB-CEP accounted for only 8.6 percent of all Navy recruits with such scores on the AFQT. It seems the program achieves its purpose, according to DoD Directive 1304.12, in gaining access to the high-quality high school market, at least in some high schools; yet, only a fraction of those high-quality students eventually join the military. Many of them may be taking the ASVAB at the MEPS, and then joining one of the military Services. Only a little over half of the high schools use the ASVAB-CEP, so high-quality students who are not offered the high school ASVAB must obviously take it elsewhere.

The ASVAB-CEP has no goals or objectives established to measure its effectiveness. No goals are set for the number of leads generated, the number of associated recruits, the number of schools tested, the percentage of high-quality contracts, or the percentage of the junior and senior population tested. The question may thus be asked: is 6 percent of leads enlisting a good return on DoD's investment of time, money and other resources?

## VI. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### A. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Several findings emerged from this study of the DoD Student Testing Program, supported by data collected from MEPCOM, CNRC, and Navy RINCs.

The general finding of the study is that from 1998 through 2004 the ASVAB-CEP experienced a downward trend. During this period, the number of juniors and seniors tested fell significantly (764,973 to 651,065). Similarly, the number of sophomores tested declined by almost 50 percent. More importantly, the number of recruiter leads dropped from 467,000 to 431,000, and the percentage of leads enlisting fell from 7 to 6 percent. Further, the proportion of recruits enlisting with a high school ASVAB fell to 14 percent in 2004, after averaging nearly 16 percent for a number of years. Finally, the number of high schools using the ASVAB-CEP declined from 13,400 to 12,600.

The Department of Defense is paying over \$12,000,000 to enlist 6 percent of the qualified leads generated from the ASVAB-CEP, resulting in 14 percent of all recruits. This cost includes testing with the ASVAB-CEP in 56.8 percent of the nation's high schools. A cost not usually included, is a recruiter's time and travel to proctor the high school ASVAB. In 2004 alone, it is estimated that recruiters spent over 54,000 hours proctoring high school ASVABs.

Some critics of the ASVAB-CEP have claimed it is deceptive, sold to schools and students primarily as a

career counseling program rather than a vehicle for recruiting. In fact, students and parents may have no say in the decision of school officials to release student ASVAB scores and personal information to military recruiters. Yet, since the enactment of the No Child Left Behind law, recruiters have easier access to information on students and critics of ASVAB-CEP have lost much of their argument.

The high school ASVAB may be subject to fraudulent enlistments. No personal identification of students is checked or verified at the time of testing. Tests are passed out randomly, with no confirmation of test serial number for each individual student. Even if identification were checked, two students could still take the test for one another without being detected. These relaxed security measures contrast with those at a MEPS or MET site, where applicants must sign a form to test, be sponsored by a recruiter, show identification (or provide a thumb print) at the test, and test in groups of no more than 30.

MEPCOM has no tracking system to determine if post-test interpretations are being performed in the high schools. Without the post-test interpretations, students may not understand how their ASVAB scores relate to military and civilian occupations. Consequently, the ASVAB-CEP might be failing to fully meet at least one of its main objectives, to serve as a career-counseling program.

Eight themes resulted from the survey of Navy RINCs. These are:

- Important Recruiting Tool
- Make Test Mandatory
- No Testing Sophomores
- Proctoring Value Questioned
- Students Not Serious
- Interpretations Are Important
- Information Not Released
- Poor School Cooperation.

The survey of RINCs shows that the ASVAB-CEP is considered quite valuable for Navy recruiting. At the same time, survey respondents felt that the program can be improved. While 87 percent of the RINCs surveyed felt the ASVAB-CEP is valuable for leads, only 16 percent felt testing sophomores benefits their recruiting stations. These findings concur with those of prior research.

The Navy is looking to annually enlist approximately 70 percent of its recruits with a score of AFQT 50 or above. The Navy's professional and highly technical occupations require high-quality recruits. In fiscal 2004, 8.6 percent of the Navy's high-quality recruits were enlisted with a test score through the ASVAB-CEP; the majority of high-quality recruits (53 percent) took the ASVAB at a MEPS.

## B. CONCLUSIONS

Many of the findings in this study are similar to those in HumRRO's 1999 report on the ASVAB-CEP. For example, HumRRO indicates "approximately 16 percent of all new accessions were derived from the CEP" (Laurence and

Ramsberger 1999, 1-5). This study identified an average of 16 percent of recruits from 1998 through 2004. Further, the comments of recruiters in both studies show that the number-one suggestion is to make ASVAB testing mandatory for all high schools, a highly unlikely proposition.

As previously stated, the primary purpose of this study is to examine the views of a major stakeholder, the Navy recruiter, regarding the effectiveness of the ASVAB-CEP. With nearly nine out of ten RINCs indicating the program is a valuable source for leads, the ASVAB-CEP seems to be effective in that respect. This is important, because it is apparently accomplishing one of its two main objectives. The other is to serve as a career-counseling vehicle for students. The effectiveness of this second objective is questionable. Without some type of report, feedback mechanism, or tracking system, DoD is unable to determine if the program is being used adequately for career counseling. There is not enough emphasis placed on this second program objective.

Clearly, the ASVAB-CEP is an effective recruiting tool for most recruiters. ASVAB results include students' names and phone numbers and scores of juniors and seniors can be used to qualify for enlistment. The ASVAB-CEP saves valuable time, money, and resources by not having students test at a MEPS or MET site. Recruiters can also better screen applicants for possible enlistment. Additionally, the program provides recruiter visibility in the high schools. The more visibility, the more opportunities recruiters have for encouraging students to enlist.

One would think that setting metrics should be a standard practice for any company or institution to measure success and help determine areas for improvement. However, the ASVAB-CEP has no model to examine its return on investment. All testing numbers are declining. DoD is spending over \$12,000,000 annually to test 10 percent of all high school juniors and seniors to gain approximately 26,000 recruits annually, but has no way to evaluate if the program is cost-effective. The average recruiter does not depend on the ASVAB-CEP to make mission.

The purpose of testing high school sophomores is questionable. As previously observed, the majority of RINCs felt it was a waste of time since the scores of sophomores cannot be used for enlistment. DoD may be investing time and effort in younger students to get them interested early in joining the military, but recruiters receive no immediate return on investment from testing them. Further, one can argue whether planting a "seed" in the minds of sophomores would make any difference later. Besides recruiter visibility in the schools, the testing of sophomores seems to be a relatively poor use of time and resources.

A majority of the Navy's high-quality recruits take the ASVAB at a MEPS. Unlike a high school ASVAB, where students may take the test only to get out of class, applicants go to a MEPS with the thought of performing well on the ASVAB to qualify for enlistment. The testing atmosphere is quite different at a MEPS, and more conducive

to encouraging a higher score. Higher scores result in more training opportunities and potential benefits for high-quality recruits.

Due to less stringent test security measures under the high school ASVAB, a number of recruits might be joining the military with some other student's test score. Additionally, a recruit who joined with an illegitimate test score might be a candidate for early discharge or job reclassification, since the test scores are used to determine aptitude for military service and training. Obviously, the consequences of such fraudulent enlistment are significant.

The ASVAB-CEP is still somewhat deceptive in advertising its purpose, which could eventually affect the military's public image. Although the No Child Left Behind law gives military recruiters another means to obtain students' personal information and has silenced some critics of the ASVAB-CEP, one major difference exists between the two. The No Child Left Behind law affords parents of students an Opt-out form, which would block the release of personal information. The ASVAB-CEP has no such form. Without parental or student consent, school officials can release student personal information to military recruiters. One might compare this practice to the unauthorized release of personal information to telemarketers and ask, should this practice be accepted?



### C. RECOMMENDATIONS

The ASVAB-CEP has remained relatively unchanged over the past 30 years in its administration and purpose. The following recommendations are based on the results of this thesis:

First, create a tracking system for post-test interpretations. If post-test interpretations are the heart of the ASVAB-CEP, then they should be treated as such.

Second, reconsider testing high school sophomores. Their scores are not valid for enlistment, but recruiters must still proctor the ASVAB.

Third, promote the true purpose of the program. Recruiters think the program is for leads. High schools and their students are often led to believe that the ASVAB-CEP is a career-counseling tool. Identify the main purpose of the program and market it accordingly.

Fourth, reduce the potential for fraud. Devise security measures to reduce the potential for fraudulent enlistments. Ensure that the test scores of high school students are their own scores.

Finally, establish goals for the program to determine effectiveness. Without goals or objectives, success cannot be measured.

### D. AREAS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research should seek to evaluate the declining numbers associated with the ASVAB-CEP from 1998 through 2004. The declining numbers have resulted in fewer military accessions than in past years, which could affect

military readiness in the long run. A detailed explanation of the decline may help the recruiting services restructure their efforts in the high school market.

A cost-benefit study on the ASVAB-CEP may also be useful. HumRRO completed one in 1999, but the program and its associated costs have changed since then. HumRRO's study indicated that the program was cost-effective.

Finally, research should be conducted to analyze attrition and reclassification rates (at Recruit Training Centers and trade schools) of recruits who enlisted with scores from the ASVAB-CEP. If students enlisted with a fraudulent score, then they are more of a risk to be discharged prematurely or be reclassified into another job, since they were most likely not qualified for the job or training in which they were originally assigned.

## APPENDIX A. SURVEY QUESTIONS

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SURVEY OF RECRUITERS-IN-CHARGE: THE ASVAB STUDENT TESTING CAREER EXPLORATION PROGRAM (CEP)

1. I have read the Privacy Act Statement and understand that this questionnaire is voluntary and anonymous.

yes

Please indicate your degree of agreement or disagreement with the following statements:

2. The High School ASVAB is a valuable source of leads for my recruiting station.

Strongly agree    Agree    Neutral    Disagree    Strongly disagree

3. Proctoring the High School ASVAB is a productive use of my time.

Strongly agree    Agree    Neutral    Disagree    Strongly disagree

4. The High School ASVAB increases my recruiter access to schools.

Strongly agree    Agree    Neutral    Disagree    Strongly disagree

5. If the High School ASVAB were discontinued, my recruiting efforts would suffer.

Strongly agree    Agree    Neutral    Disagree    Strongly disagree

6. Without the High School ASVAB, my station could probably not make mission/goal.

Strongly agree    Agree    Neutral    Disagree    Strongly disagree

7. If I receive a High School List/Student Directory from a particular High School, it is still important to administer the High School ASVAB at that school.

Strongly agree    Agree    Neutral    Disagree    Strongly disagree

8. Testing High School sophomores benefits my recruiting station.

Strongly agree    Agree    Neutral    Disagree    Strongly disagree

Please answer the following:

9. Are you a member of the Career Recruiter Force (CRF)?

YES\_\_\_\_\_ NO\_\_\_\_\_

10. If you had the High School List/Student Directory at the beginning of the school year, would you rather wait for the ASVAB test to be administered at the High School or immediately test your prospect at the MEPS/MET Site?

Wait for High School ASVAB\_\_\_\_\_ Test at MEPS/MET Site\_\_\_\_\_

11. Has anyone in your office ever personally conducted an ASVAB post-test interpretation at a High School?

YES\_\_\_\_\_ NO\_\_\_\_\_

12. Has anyone in your office ever received training on interpreting High School ASVAB scores for students?

YES\_\_\_\_\_ NO\_\_\_\_\_

13. In what region of the United States is your recruiting station located?

Northeast\_\_\_\_\_ Mid-Atlantic\_\_\_\_\_ Southeast\_\_\_\_\_

North Central\_\_\_\_\_ South Central\_\_\_\_\_ West\_\_\_\_\_

Pacific\_\_\_\_\_

Note: Northeast = CT, MA, ME, NH, NJ, NY, PA, RI, VT; Mid-Atlantic = DC, DE, MD, VA, WV; Southeast = AL, FL, GA, KY, LA, MS, NC, SC, TN; North Central = IA, IL, IN, MI, MN, ND, NE, OH, SD, WI; South Central = AR, KS, MO, OK, TX; West = AZ, CO, ID, MT, NM, NV, UT, WY; Pacific = AK, CA, HI, OR, WA.

14. Is your recruiting station located in a Rural (country) or Urban (city) area?

RURAL \_\_\_\_\_ URBAN \_\_\_\_\_ NOT SURE \_\_\_\_\_

15. Do you consider your recruiting area a pro-military or anti-military environment?

VERY PRO-MILITARY \_\_\_\_\_ SOMEWHAT PRO-MILITARY \_\_\_\_\_

NEITHER PRO-MILITARY NOR ANTI-MILITARY \_\_\_\_\_

VERY ANTI-MILITARY \_\_\_\_\_ SOMEWHAT ANTI-MILITARY \_\_\_\_\_

16. As a percentage, approximately how many of your station's annual net new contracts result from High School ASVAB leads? (Example: 20% (2 out of 10))

0% \_\_\_\_\_















10% \_\_\_\_\_ 20% \_\_\_\_\_ 30% \_\_\_\_\_ 40% \_\_\_\_\_ 50% \_\_\_\_\_














60% \_\_\_\_\_ 70% \_\_\_\_\_ 80% \_\_\_\_\_ 90% \_\_\_\_\_ 100% \_\_\_\_\_

17. Please comment on any recommendations/changes/experiences/highlights you may have for the ASVAB Student Testing Career Exploration Program (CEP).











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## APPENDIX B. SURVEY RESULTS











1.	I have read the Privacy Act Statement and understand that this questionnaire is voluntary and anonymous.		
	Yes 	438	100%
	<b>Total</b>	438	100%
2.	The High School ASVAB is a valuable source of leads for my recruiting station.	<b>Number of Responses</b>	<b>Response Ratio</b>
	Strongly agree 	227	52%
	Agree 	151	35%
	Neutral 	30	7%
	Disagree	19	4%
	Strongly disagree	9	2%
	<b>Total</b>	436	100%
3.	Proctoring the High School ASVAB is a productive use of my time.	<b>Number of Responses</b>	<b>Response Ratio</b>
	Strongly agree 	73	17%
	Agree 	133	30%
	Neutral 	118	27%
	Disagree 	71	16%
	Strongly disagree 	42	10%
	<b>Total</b>	437	100%
4.	The High School ASVAB increases my recruiter access to schools.	<b>Number of Responses</b>	<b>Response Ratio</b>
	Strongly agree 	121	28%
	Agree 	155	36%
	Neutral 	68	16%
	Disagree 	70	16%
	Strongly disagree 	20	5%
	<b>Total</b>	434	100%

5. If the High School ASVAB were discontinued, my recruiting efforts would suffer.	Number of Responses	Response Ratio
Strongly agree 	145	33%
Agree 	142	33%
Neutral 	57	13%
Disagree 	74	17%
Strongly disagree	16	4%
<b>Total</b>	434	100%
6. Without the High School ASVAB, my station could probably not make mission/goal.	Number of Responses	Response Ratio
Strongly agree 	40	9%
Agree 	60	14%
Neutral 	88	20%
Disagree 	166	38%
Strongly disagree 	82	19%
<b>Total</b>	436	100%
7. If I receive a High School List/Student Directory from a particular High School, it is still important to administer the High School ASVAB at that school.	Number of Responses	Response Ratio
Strongly agree 	193	44%
Agree 	165	38%
Neutral 	38	9%
Disagree 	30	7%
Strongly disagree	8	2%
<b>Total</b>	434	100%



8.	Testing High School sophomores benefits my recruiting station.	Number of Responses	Response Ratio
	Strongly agree	11	3%
	Agree 	56	13%
	Neutral 	69	16%
	Disagree 	153	35%
	Strongly disagree 	148	34%
	<b>Total</b>	437	100%
9.	Are you a member of the Career Recruiter Force (CRF) ?	Number of Responses	Response Ratio
	Yes 	91	21%
	No 	346	79%
	<b>Total</b>	437	100%
10.	If you had the High School List/Student Directory at the beginning of the school year, would you rather wait for the ASVAB test to be administered at the High School or immediately test your prospect at the MEPS/MET Site?	Number of Responses	Response Ratio
	Wait for High School ASVAB 	48	11%
	Test at MEPS/MET Site 	387	89%
	<b>Total</b>	435	100%
11.	Has anyone in your office ever personally conducted an ASVAB post-test interpretation at a High School?	Number of Responses	Response Ratio
	Yes 	214	49%
	No 	222	51%
	<b>Total</b>	436	100%

12.	Has anyone in your office ever received training on interpreting High School ASVAB scores for students?		
	Yes 	148	34%
	No 	289	66%
Total		437	100%
13.	In what region of the United States is your recruiting station located?		
	Northeast 	64	15%
	Mid-Atlantic 	23	5%
	Southeast 	87	20%
	North Central 	77	18%
	South Central 	73	17%
	West 	59	14%
	Pacific 	54	12%
Total		437	100%
<p>Note: Northeast = CT, MA, ME, NH, NJ, NY, PA, RI, VT; Mid-Atlantic = DC, DE, MD, VA, WV; Southeast = AL, FL, GA, KY, LA, MS, NC, SC, TN; North Central = IA, IL, IN, MI, MN, ND, NE, OH, SD, WI; South Central = AR, KS, MO, OK, TX; West = AZ, CO, ID, MT, NM, NV, UT, WY; Pacific = AK, CA, HI, OR, WA.</p>			
14.	Is your recruiting station located in a Rural (country) or Urban (city) area?		
	Rural 	189	43%
	Urban 	236	54%
	Not sure	11	3%
Total		436	100%

15.	Do you consider your recruiting area a pro-military or anti-military environment?	Number of Responses	Response Ratio
	Very Pro-military 	44	10%
	Somewhat Pro-military 	209	48%
	Neither Pro-military nor Anti-military 	123	28%
	Very Anti-military 	25	6%
	Somewhat Anti-military 	35	8%
	<b>Total</b>	436	100%
16.	As a percentage, approximately how many of your station's annual net new contracts result from High School ASVAB leads? (Example: 20% (2 out of 10))	Number of Responses	Response Ratio
	0% 	18	4%
	10% 	156	36%
	20% 	110	25%
	30% 	77	18%
	40% 	37	9%
	50%	16	4%
	60%	10	2%
	70%	7	2%
	80%	3	1%
	90%	0	0%
	100%	1	0%
	<b>Total</b>	435	100%

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APPENDIX C. RECRUITER COMMENTS TO SURVEY QUESTION

17

- 1 ENSURE THE HIGH SCHOOL TEST DURING HIGH SCHOOL HOURS. INSTEAD OF PRIOR TO SCHOOL HOURS. TO ENSURE MORE STUDENTS PARTICIPATION. TO PROMOTE NAVY AWARENESS.
- 2 Get it done in all schools that you can.
- 3 The asvab is not administered at my 3 high schools.
- 4 no comment
- 5 Recommend when giving the ASVAB test to concentrate in seniors @ juniors only!
- 6 I feel it should be a mandatory test for all students and to be givin at the beginning of each school year.
- 7 Have Junior and Senior classes take asvab for better market id
- 8 make the test the same 11 sections as the test given at meps
- 9 I think it should be mandatory for all High Schools to either ASVAB Juniors or Seniors
- 10 THE ONLY SCHOOL IN OUR AREA THAT HOLDS THE ASVAB TEST AT SCHOOL IS A NON TRADITIONAL EDUCATION SCHOOL. IT WOULD BE NICE TO MAKE THE ASVAB TEST MANDATORY FOR ALL SCHOOLS. INSTEAD OF EACH STATE GIVING THEIR OWN TESTS, WHY NOT USE THE ASVAB AND THEN THEY WOULD SEE HOW THEIR SCHOOL PERFORMS ON THE NATIONAL LEVEL. WE NEED MORE ASSISTANCE GETTING THE TEST ADMINISTERED. SCHOOLS THAT GIVE THE ASVAB ARE USUALLY PRO NAVY. THE SCHOOL GIVING THE ASVAB SAVES A RECRUITER MORE TIME THAN ONE WOULD THINK.
- 11 I think that the CEP is a very important tool for the students as well as the recruiters in charge of the school
- 12 include the occupational career outlook handbook in the debrief package.
- 13 it's a very good tool especialy for breaking into anti military schools
- 14 recommend face to face pre and post asvab visits to explain/reinforce the benefits and to assist with interpretation.
- 15 SOME SCHOOLS ARE VERY DISTANT FROM MY NRS AND ASVAB TEST TIMES ARE MOSTLY EARLY IN A.M.. IT WOULD BENEFIT MY NRS TO HAVE TEST TIMES START AROUND 1000. ALSO THE # OF STUDENTS



PROJECTED TO TEST IS NEVER ACCURATE AND MOST OF THE TIME 2-3 TIMES THE ACTUAL # OF STUDENTS WHO TEST. A MORE ACCURATE # OF PROJECTED TEST WOULD HELP.

- 16 test more schools! combining our test with act and sat for college and millatary enterance would change everthing about our production.
- 17 alot of windshield time to be there for an asvab that we are required to be at. an iffective use of my time when they only test 10-20 students (many schools in our area are very small like this). the test proctors do not need extra help for this size of test.
- 18 I feel that the schools should make the setting for the students more professional and give them a better testing environment. (Ex. Students took test with lap boards in auditorium with poor lighting and the atmosphere was loud and had interruptions.) Testing in the school allows for the students to get face to face with the recruiters for questions in a more subtle environment then maybe initially comming into the office. Testing in the High School cuts out having my Recruiters do extra work since we are so far from MEPS, the testing aspect is out of the way and now all we have to do is sell them and put them on schedule. The ASVAB testing program is a great thing to have and is an instrumental tool to helping minimize time.
- 19 Proctoring the ASVAB test for 10th graders is a waste of time for Recruiters
- 20 My problem is that our local school don't take it seriously. A) They don't tell the students what the ASVAB is for. They just say go take this test and the student show up blind. B) They flat out don't care IE: They roll a cart of cookies & juice in during the ASVAB for "Nutrition Break". C) The proctor is told not to eject anybody for cheating. D) The proctor is not allowed to ask if anybody doesn't want to take it please leave.
- 21 If we could somehow get help to encourage the schools to test all juniors each year.
- 22 it takes a while to get ASVAB scores back to us (months). Most schools either don't give ASVAB or they give it to 11th grade only. We have the EST which is a pre-ASVAB test that we give to applicants. This test tells us what approx. they would score on an ASVAB. It's convenient if they already took the ASVAB in their HS but not too often.
- 23 TOO MANY OF THE SCHOOLS TAKE THE OPTION TO NOT RELEASE THE

STUDENT INFO TO THE SERVICE. EVEN IF THEY PUT MILITARY AS PLAN. WE SPEND MANY HOURS PROCTORING TESTS TO SCHOOLS THAT DO NOT EVEN RELEASE THE INFO.

- 24 1. Need more promotion/explanation of ASVAB. A lot of students and parents don't understand the program. (exp: They fear taking the test will automatically put them in the military.) Some students don't hear about the ASVAB until the day they take it. 2. It is getting more and more difficult to get good school lists (with ph/address). School administrators are wary about giving out personal info on students.
- 25 One of my high schools does not allow students to put contact info on the ASVAB, they must use school address and phone number. This is whether the student wants to be contacted or not. Each student should be able to choose at the time of testing if they want info released for recruiting purposes. Make it just one more bubble they fill in.
- 26 TRAINING ON HOW TO INTERPERATE RESULTS TO STUDENTS.
- 27 n/a
- 28 The county we are in tests all high school seniors, hover i don't think that it is nessicary, it often takes more time to process people with prior high school test, anybody that wants to join the military will be more than willing to take the asvab at meps thus making high school asvabs redundant. especially now that all hs give un name list.
- 29 I BELIEVE ASVAB INTERPRETATION SHOULD BE TAUGHT AT NORU.
- 30 I would like to have training on how to complete a ASVAB inturp so I would have more ability to describe to the students more on what the ASVAB does for them.
- 31 Recruiters should not be procter ASVAB,s unless there is at least 1 senior who is testing. The ladies who are in charge of the ASVAB need to realize that the Recruiters are there to proctor not to be there personal servants....
- 32 TALK ABOUT ASVAB TESTING MOST SCHOOLS ASVAB BUT WOULD NOT RELEASE AND MOST KIDS ARE TOLD THAT THIS TEST IS FOR JOINING THE MILITARY SO THEY DON,T SIGN UP TO TAKE IT LIKE THEY WOULD FOR THE SAT,S.WE NEED TO CORRECT THAT.
- 33 would be great if 6 months retest policy went away
- 34 IF YOU DONT HAVE ENOUGH PROCTERS THEY CANCEL THE TEST THIS MAKES NO SENSE WHY HAVE SO MANY RECRUITERS AT A TEST ???



- 35 KEEP TESTING, WORK TOWARDS MAKING IT MANDATORY FOR ALL JUNIORS TO TEST ON THE ASVAB TEST AT SCHOOL. ALSO, A LOT OF PROCTORS WILL TELL THE STUDENTS NOT TO PUT SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBERS, PHONE NUMBERS OR ADDRESSES ON THE ANSWER SHEETS, THIS HURTS US. THE KIDS WILL PUT IT ON IF WE DONT TELL THEM NOT TO.
- 36 Give the asvabs at high schools, but the legth and under manning of my station, hinders prospecting since no active recruiting is allowed at the high school. and every kind who thinks military doesn't know the diffrence from army or navy
- 37 Having the asvab already done on an applicant saves alot of time when processing them in rural areas.
- 38 Many students use this testing time as a social event and results do not always indicate true scores.
- 39 I THINK IT IS A GOOD IDEA TO TEST STUDENTS IN THE 10TH OR 11TH GRADE DUE TO MOST KIDS DO NOT TAKE MATH THERE 11TH OR 12TH GRADE YEAR IN HIGH SCHOOL THEREFORE IF WE WAIT TILL THE SENIOR YEAR TO TEST THESE KID'S ALOT OF THEM HAVE BEEN OUT OF PRACTICE AND END UP FAILING THE TEST, THEREFORE IF WE TESTED THEM IN 10TH GRADE TOWARD THE END OF THE SCHOOL YEAR THERE ASVAB WOULD BE GOOD TILL THE END OF THERE SENIOR YEAR WHICH WOULD HELP US OUT TO PUT MORE APPLICANTS IN THE NAVY.
- 40 With the current laws in place, we should request all high school students to take the ASVAB.
- 41 I HAVE BEEN IN RECRUITING FOR 5 YEARS NOW, AND MY EXPERIENCE THUS FAR AT HIGH SCHOOL'S ADMINISTERING ASVABS HAVE BEEN LESS THAN FAVORABLE. I HAVE SEEN AND HEARD THE KIDS SAY THEY ARE ONLY TAKING THE TEST TO GET OUT OF CLASS, SEE THERE BOYFRIEND/GIRLFRIEND, ETC. MOST OF THE TIME THE ENVIRONMENT FOR THOSE WHO REALLY WANT TO TAKE THE "TEST" SERIOUSLY DON'T GET TO BECAUSE OF THE STIGMA THAT IS ATTACHED TO THE "ASVAB". THE MAJORITY OF THE YOUNG MEN AND WOMAN THAT TAKE THE TEST IN A CROWDED LUNCH ROOM DON'T TAKE IT SERIOUSLY AND DON'T BOTHER TO RESPECT THOSE THAT DO WANT TO DO THEIR BEST. I WOULD RATHER PROSPECT A KID FROM A PHONE LIST COLD CALL AND TAKE HIM TO MEPS FOR THE TEST BECAUSE THAT WAY I KNOW 1.) HE WANTS TO BE THERE, AND 2.) HE WILL BE AFFORDED THE PROPER ENVIRONMENT TO DO THE BEST HE CAN. THANKS FOR YOUR TIME.
- 42 THANK YOU
- 43 I currently have 1 high school (a private high school) out



of 21 that participates in ASVAB high school testing. I firmly believe if we had more schools involved we would have much more success. It is unfortunate that more high schools do not participate. I personally do not have the expertise or knowledge to gain access to these high schools.

44 STUDENTS THAT ARE FORCED BY THE SCHOOL TO TAKE THE ASVAB, THINK THAT IT WILL SIGN THEM UP OR KNOW WE WON'T TALK TO THEM IF THEY FAIL, SO THEY PUT ALL "C" OR "A". OR REFUSE TO SIGN THEM. AS FAR A PROCTORING, IT IS A WASTE OF TIME. IT WASTES 3 HOURS OF TIME TO WALK AROUND AND STAND THERE, WERE I COULD BE PROSPECTING OR PROCESSING

45 THE PROGRAM IS A VERY VALUABLE TOOL TO ALLOW US THE TIME TO SPEND IN FRONT OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS. ALSO ALLOWS THE SCHOOL OFFICIALS TO SEE WHAT WE ACTUALLY CAN PROVIDE FOR THERE STUDENTS. AND HOW WE CAN GIVE THE STUDENTS THERE OPTIONS ON FURTHERING THERE EDUCATION, AT THE SAME TIME OFFERING THE STUDENTS AN EXPERIENCE OF ON THE JOB TRAINING THAT WILL MAKE THEM MORE MARKETABLE ON THE CIVILIAN SIDE AT THE SAME TIME GETTING THERE EDUCATION. YES WE NEED TO KEEP THE ASVAB TESTS IN OUR HIGH SCHOOLS.....:)

46 so many student take the asvab in school just to get out of class that the scores are no a good indication of the individuals potential. Only benefit is the ID of individuals interested in military.

47 I believe the asvab testing should be complete by civilians and not recruiters. The asvab is a great tool for recruiters but, lost time and communications become an issue between recruiters and the test proctors. Causing schools to get upset at both and them not wanting to give the test anymore. I also believe they should come back and do the asvab interp. for the school counselor and the kids. Because they are the ones who are the experts on this not recruiters. The asvab should be encouraged for all students who are junior and seniors to take. to help them to look at there career paths.

48 The main problem we are having with High School ASVABS is the proctor not showing up or showing up late. This is giving school a bad taste about the military. The service proctors are there on time on the days we need to be there, but the main proctor with the tests and booklets seem to be having problems getting to where they need to be when they need to be there.

- 49 THAT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT MAKE IT MADATORY TO GIVE THE TEST TO JUNIORS/SENIORS
- 50 While the asvab is good, because I have schools that test the entire class. I also have schools that have 450 seniors, and only 25 get tested. another problem is some of the guidance teachers tell students (I have heard this in person) not to put phone numbers, addresses. Just put your first intial and last name, so those recruiters don't call you.
- 51 Since the ASVAB has been re-normed, lower the qualifying score back to 31.
- 52 some schools are not making the students information available to us. example (student phone numbers) i think we should have access to to this information.
- 53 Most students in my recruiting area cannot pass the ASVAB because most are not required to have to take Algebra or Geometry in H.S. to graduate. This is a set back for us, but do we really use these types of math with the majority of our jobs in the Navy? No, we do not. We need to make the ASVAB a more even playing field to provide others with more opportunities to pass.
- 54 Typically a waste of time. Most students tend to take the test just to miss class.
- 55 the asvab at school can hurt more than it helps. students will take the asvab at school and just goof off. then decide later that they want to join and have to re-asvab and if they score to high they have to take a confirmation asvab.
- 56 mandatory teachers do not encourage students to withhold ph.#
- 57 make it a congressional requirement for every school
- 58 To assist recruiting make the student test score be graded off the highest score or have the option not to use it since most students that are required by the score to test goof off on it making it a problem for them/us later when reality hit and they come in to join
- 59 I JUST HOPE THE CIVILIAN PROCTORS WOULD TELL THE STUDENTS TO WRITE THEIR ADDRESS AND PHONE NUMBER VICE THE SCHOOL ADDRESS AND PHONE NUMBER.
- 60 OFFER A SELECTION OF WHAT BRANCH OF MILITARY THEY ARE INTERESTED IN IF THEY CHOSE MILITARY AS FUTURE PLANS.



- 61 must be mandatory for male seniors, give them school credits for passing or scoring 50 and above.
- 62 ONLY ABOUT 20% OF THE STUDENTS IN OUR SCHOOLS LET THE STUDENTS TEST
- 63 As time passes the ASVAB test becomes less and less important to the administrators not the students. When recruiters go to see if the test is going to be given or does the school want to test I have found here the schools really don't care if the test is given or not. I personally think that all public schools should be required to give the ASVAB test two times per year and that it is required to take the ASVAB if before you graduate high school which gives all kids three years to take the exam.
- 64 Stop testing kids age 16 or in sophomore status. They aren't qualified and it makes no sense wasting theres or our time.
- 65 RECRUITERS SHOULD NOT BE USED TO PROCTOR ASVAB, WE ARE ALWAYS TOLD THAT THIS ASVAB SHOULD IN NO WAY INFLUENCE STUDENTS. SO TO KEEP IT NEUTRAL, DON'T USE RECRUITERS TO ADMINISTER THE ASVAB.
- 66 LET THE RECRUITERS SIGN IN AS SOON AS THEY GET TO THE TEST SITE. GET THE SCORE OUT TO THE FIELD A LOT SOONER.
- 67 no matter what age you take the asvab at i n high school. your score should be able to be used for processing.
- 68 As a rural 2 man station with over 120 schools and a zillion square miles the program is very valuable to me. I write about 30% of my contracts from those who indicate military on the asvab. It also provides valuable blueprint info ie mental qualification that could prevent me from driving countless miles for interviews with people who won't pass the asvab. That said I feel I don't get any benefit by proctoring these tests. In some cases I will travel more than 450 miles rt to proctor a test for less than 30 students. This puts a major drain on man power during testing months. I wish we could continue it but find another option for proctors in our rural areas were a small station has so many schools and so many miles to go. Thanks
- 69 more involvement from the educational specialist.
- 70 I THINK ASVAB TESTING IS IMPORTANT, BUT I DON'T THINK RECRUITERS PROCTORING THE ASVAB IS AS IMPORTANT. I THINK

THAT MEPCOM SHOULD PROVIDE ALL THE PROCTORS TO ADMINISTER THE REQUIRED TESTS.

- 71 IF A SCHOOL AGREES TO ASVAB THEIR ENTIRE JUNIOR CLASS THEY SHOULD NOT HAVE TO RELEASE A SENIOR LIST. THIS COULD BE A SELLING POINT TO SCHOOLS TO MEET THE NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND ACT. THE STUDENTS COULD STILL OPT OUT AND THE COUNSELORS WOULD STILL BE BENEFITING WITH A USEFUL TOOL. I DON'T BELIEVE THE ASVAB IS SOLD THIS WAY OR THE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION UNDERSTANDS THE ROLE OF THE ASVAB. THEIR STUDENTS WILL BE CONTACTED REGARDLESS SO THEY MIGHT WANT TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE FREE TOOL FOR THEIR COUNSELORS.
- 72 Schools should not be given the option to release asvab score, I have numerous school where we give the test, but the scores are never released, it turns into a big waste of time.
- 73 need to supply more then one EST for it is like the real asvab.
- 74 MY STATION ONLY HAS 2 PEOPLE AND WE HAVE 27 HIGH SCHOOLS AND 3 VO TECHS AND OVER HALF OF THESE ARE AN HOUR TO TWO HOURS AWAY AND WHEN WE ARE TESTING 10TH AND 11TH GRADE STUDENTS IT IS A COMPLETE WAST OF TIME. TESTING IS NOT ALL BAD BUT MAYBE HIREING MORE CIVILIAN PERSONEL TO PROCTOR WOULD BE BETTER, BECAUSE QUITE HONESTLY WE DONT HAVE THE TIME TO GO PICK UP LAPBOARDS DROP THEM OFF DO THE ASVAB ECT ECT.WE HAVE ALOT MORE PRODUCTIVE THINGS WE COULD BE DOING TO MAKE MISSION. AND MOST OF THE KIDS WHO TAKE THE TEST AND DO DECIDE TO JOIN THE MILLITARY DOWN THE ROAD TAKE OUR EST AND THEN REASVAB AT THE MEPS AND DO ALOT BETTER BECAUSE THEY WHERE NOT SERIOUS WHEN THEY TOOK IT AT SCHOOL.
- 75 These young adults are taught to work with calculators, however, when given the ASVAB test, the use of this instrument is taken away. This greatly hinders the child. When in the military, we are allowed to use calculators, and I believe that these students should also have that right, seeing how we are trying to put them into our service. In summary, I believe that we should allow these students to use calculators.
- 76 HS ASVABs save my station countless hours of wasted time. It also promotes military awareness in an indirect manor. The availability of these tests is an extremely valuable tool in my job as a recruiter.
- 77 At larger schools we need to start giving the asvab at a



site like the armory because the kids act up so much in the schools. We are unable to control them some of the time and it is a big time waster.

78 Having a recruiter show up five minutes late and not getting an ASVAB list is UNSAT and the rules need to be changed. If they don't show up at all fine, don't get the list. All services gets punished if one service screws up... UNSAT the "proctors" shouldn't be made to get everything out of the testers vehicle etc, that's what he gets paid to do... that is a waste of MY TIME.

79 non

80 I'm seeing more high schools making the ASVAB optional vice mandatory. The common excuse from counselors is so much state testing that they do already. I will say that most counselors in my area do believe the ASVAB is effective in giving their students career suggestions from the technical sections and an ACT/SAT comparison score from the WK, AR, PC, and MK sections. Thanks FTC(ss)  
Barrow Rinc NRS McComb, MS

81 MAKE TEST RESULTS AVAILABLE TO ALL SERVICES AT SAME TIME...SEEMS ARMY GETS RESULTS FIRST

82 When the proctor is giving instructions, STOP TELLING THE STUDENTS THAT IF YOU DON'T FILL IN THE BUBBLES THE RECRUITERS WILL DO IT FOR YOU. Some schools have hundreds of students.

83 i have found that testing 10th graders is useless. i also know that tesating every other yr in some high schools is not far to those that are about to graduate.

84 i would like to see seniors take the asvab test at the 2 month mark after school starts. no short versions and have them take the whole 9 part test

85 Ya'll have a Merry Christmas!!!!

86 There needs to be some type of guideline to go by when debriefing the ASVAB. If there is-it isn't know to field recruiters!

87 Mega ASVAB are conducted many school the same day, some times is impossible to be proctored by the amount of local recruiters

88 I recommend a secure online ASVAB that can be conducted at any time and proctored by trained personnel, E-7 and above, with written authority of the Commanding Officer. This would eliminate extreme manhours spent by proctors

and recruiters traveling to and from remote locations. In addition, allow expedient testing and processing of new applicants. I also suggest, re-evaluating minimum wait periods for re-testing. Example: 1st retest in 2 weeks, 2nd and 3rd re-test in 1 calendar month. 4th re-test in 4 months. If all attempts are less than qualifying they should be temporarily disqualified for a period of 2 years. This is logical and fair to keep motivated applicants studying and opportunity for recruiters and Govt employees to spend less time traveling and more time processing applicants. Respectfully, B J Smith ETC(SW) USN

- 89 I have seen an alarming decrease in AFQT Scores since the test was renormed.
- 90 students should enter their height and weight as part of the test and should have a survey at the end of the test asking education background of students to help schools better prepare their students
- 91 The ASVAB ID's my market when the student marks "PLANS MILITARY" that is somewhat helpful.
- 92 IF A HIGH SCHOOL WERE SCHEDULED TO TAKE THE ASVAB, BUT THE TEST NEVER TOOK PLACE(NO MATTER WHAT THE REASON) SOMEONE SHOULD CONTACT THAT SCHOOL AND RESCHEDULE TO ENSURE THE ASVAB TEST HAPPENS. ALL SCHOOLS SHOULD TAKE THE ASVAB FOR SENIORS AND JUNIORS. ALL PERSONEL INVOLVED IN ADMINISTERING THE ASVAB SHOULD HAVE THE LOCAL RECRUITERS PHONE #'S AND CONTACT THEM PRIOR TO TO ENSURE THEY ARE THERE TO ASSIST AND PROCTOR. REQUEST SOMEONE TRAIN EACH RECRUITING STATION ON ASVAB PROCEDURES AND SCORE READING ETC. THANK YOU.
- 93 If there is a way to do it, recruiting would benefit by making the asvab mandatory for all high school juniors.
- 94 none
- 95 NRD Educational Specialist should be required to present themselves at the County School Board Meetings and ensure the school board knows the value of the ASVAB test as a career tool. States that require students passing a "state" exam in order to graduate should be encouraged to use the ASVAB instead, saving the state both time and money.
- 96 Make all High Schools give the ASVAB test and release the scores ASAP and test in there Junior Year.
- 97 training provided so that recruiters can interpretations



of asvab scores in a class room environment

- 98 MOST OF THE TIME I NOTICE THAT WHEN WE GET A HIGH SCHOOL ASVAB LIST, MOST OF THE PEOPLE HAVE ALREADY BEEN CONTACTED BY THE ARMY. WHEN WE ASK THE LIASONS ABOUT THIS THEY SAY THAT THE TEST ARE GIVEN OUT TO US THE SAME DAY THEY GET THEM. SO IF THAT IS THE CASE HOW IS IT THE ARMY CONTACTS THEM, SOMETIMES WEEKS BEFORE WITH THEIR SCORES.
- 99 If the Asvab is going to be given to sophomores only then it is a waste of time. More should be done to make the schools stay with giving the asvab to juniors. Or the military should use the PSSA testing critria and use those scores for entrance into the service. A separte skill test could be given at the MEPS test centers when they process. The schools are just going through the steps to say they did the testing. Also I have notice that the career counslors have a negative attitude to joining the services since I have been recruiting, like its a last option because a student cant get into school or is a trouble maker.
- 100 Testing Juniors and Sophomores is only valuable for creating Navy Awareness and assessing eligibility. MOST if not ALL students change their plans prior to becoming eligible to enlist so to attempt to use their plans as a lead source usually results in a "not interested" response.
- 101 Many schools in our area do not give the ASVAB. I believe it would be an astute use of resources to send ASVAB advocates to these schools to convince administrators to add the ASVAB to their schedules.
- 102 We would test the applicant to asvab at the MEPS site and the applicant would score higher majority of the time then the school asvab
- 103 I really don't like filling in all of the bubbles for the students personel information it takes over an hour of my time and it is not what I am there for I feel.
- 104 I like the ASVAB tests in the schools. My concern is in the testing of 10M's. It does nothing to guage where they are. Their score will not be valid for enlistment purposes and from what I have witnessed [at least 5 different tests of that level] the kids are blowing the test off... This is a waste of manhours and should be discontinued immediately...
- 105 TESTING IS A GOOD WAY TO GET YOUNG ADULTS TO THINK ABOUT

- POSSIBILITIES WITHOUT THE PRESSURE OF RECRUITERS. THEY ARE A GREAT ASSET TO RECRUITING.
- 106 HAVE EITHER THE SCHOOLS OR SOMEONE ELSE PROCTOR THE TESTS IN THE HIGH SCHOOLS
- 107 The student asvab should be given more often at every school.
- 108 dont change a thing...leave it alone
- 109 I do believe testing the students at the schools is important. It saves us(recruiters) time. We are able to prospect the correct aplicants because we already have their scores.
- 110 we never know when the test scores gets back tot he high school and when a person is going out there to evaluate the scores to the students. if this even happens at all, and when it does, it is not done correctly. the students feel more confused afterwards then before they were evaluated.
- 111 I THINK THAT THE ASVAB IS A GOOD TOOL FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS AND FOR SOME RECRUITERS.
- 112 Many students take the asvab test just because their taechers told them to. Not because they had any interest in the military. It is very frustrating when a recruiter has an ASVAB list full of passing score and none of the sudents had any military plans.
- 113 testing sophmores is a waste of time due to 1. students not taking it seriously,2. test scores not being valid when they are leigible to join 3. students dont know if they want military and if they do they usually come in during their junior year to get info. also this station puts more people in from schools that dont test because they are too large. when we talk to an individual it is easier to get them to go to meps and test to see if theyt are quaaified and then they join , when they takew the test in school they dont want to take the next step to the physical or come in the office because they want to check out college and they decline for iunterview
- 114 1-WHY NOT PUT ABOUT 5 COMPUTERS IN EVERY RESERVE CENTER THAT IS FAR AWAY FROM A MEPS SITE. THIS WAY WE COULD GET INSTANT ACCESS TO ASVAB SCORES AND HAVE THEM TEST EVERY DAY. THIS WAY WE WILL SAVE ON FUEL COSTS TO MEPS AND MAN HOURS.
- 115 it is very hard for me and my recruiters to get my high



- schools to give the asvab. there are maybe 10% that give the asvab they have to much other testing to contend with to give us the time to test.
- 116 High School test results need to have A short turnaround time.
- 117 I WOULD ENSURE TEST ADMINISTRATORS ARE PERSONABLE PEOPLE THAT CAN WORK WITH STUDENTS. FOR THE MOST PART, THEY ARE EXCELLENT, HOWEVER RECENTLY MY STATION'S AREA HAS BEEN PLAGUED WITH ONE ADMINISTRATOR THAT HAS CAUSED CONFLICT WITH MY RECRUITERS AND SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS.
- 118 Proctor/Student Ratio is a killer. Also overestimating student numbers can shut a station down for numerous hours.
- 119 no changes the only thing that i would change is for us to be able to process juniors into our dep program.
- 120 make it mandatory fro everyone in school
- 121 My recruiting station makes goal from high seniors so we really need the test to be given at the high schools in LAKE COUNTY.
- 122 I think asvabs in the school are great you get to see the people a couple of times before you met with them and when they find out about all the different options are for the asvab besides the military are great too.
- 123 PLACE MORE EMPHASIS ON THOSE STUDENTS WHO REALLY WANT TO JOIN THE MILITARY VICE THE TEST JUST BEING USED AS A WAY TO GET OUT OF CLASSES.
- 124 no coments.
- 125 ASVAB TEST SHOULD BE MANDATORY FOR ALL JUNIORS AND SENIORS. NOT ALL SCHOOLS ENFORCE THIS ISSUE MAKING IT OPTIONAL, THEREFORE THERE IS NOT A GOOD TURN OUT...
- 126 I THINK THE SCORE FOR JOINING THE NAVY SHOULD HAVE STAYED AT A 31. SINCE THEY CHANGED REVAMPED THE ASVAB I'VE HAD ALOT OF TEST FAILURES. THE HIGH SCHOOLS JUST DON'T PUSH FOR KIDS TO TAKE ALGEBRA. IF DON'T KNOW ALGEBRA IT IS A SLIM CHANCE YOU WILL EVEN PASS THE ASVAB.
- 127 Many of our schools make the ASVAB optional for Seniors. If you make anything optional to a 17,18 year old especially a test, you might as well forget it.
- 128 I think that when the asvab is scheduled with the school we should also see what other tests are being conducted in that same time frame to make the asvab testing more

- effective. Also, if there were some kind of lesson via cd-rom to better understand the asvab test scores that we could review as a station that would be very effective.
- 129 IT WOULD BE GREAT IF THEY WOULD LET THE STUDENTS THAT ARE WILLING TO TAKE THE TEST AND ARE VERY SERIOUS ABOUT IT, NOT THE ONES THAT GO IN THERE AND NOT TRY OR JUST TAKE IT TO GET OUT OF CLASS OR SOMETHING.
- 130 ASVAB TESTING IN SCHOOLS IS IMPORTANT, BUT I DONT DEPEND ON IT FOR GOAL. GIVES THE KIDS A GOOD CHANCE TO START THINKING OF THE MILITARY AS AN OPTION.
- 131 I THINK THAT HAVING THE ASVAB STUDENT TESTING CEP IS A GREAT THING WHEN IT COMES TO BEING ABLE TO SEE WHERE THE APPLICANT STANDS IN TERMS OF TESTING AND TO HAVE SOMEWHAT OF AN IDEA OF THEIR PLANS AFTER HIGH SCHOOL. I DON'T THINK A SOPHOMORE KNOWS EXACTLY WHAT THEY WANT TO DO AT THAT STAGE IN THERE LIFE AND THERE IS NO REASON TO CALL THEM WHEN WE GET THE TEST RESULTS. THEY ARE SOPHOMORES.
- 132 I HAVE ASKED SEVERAL STUDENTS THAT TAKE THE ASVAB TEST THAT TELL ME THEIR TEACHERS TELL THEM NOT TO TAKE THE TEST, MARK ANY TYPE OF ANSWER OR PUT SOME ONE ELSE SOCIAL OR NAME ON YOUR PAPER. THE REEASON FOR THIS IS THAT SO THEY WANT BE RECRUITED BY THE MILITARY.
- 133 The requirement for "name by name" accountablility on the proctor forms is rediculous, if enough recruiters are at the test and the test is valid; who cares who we are?!?!?!?
- 134 Please make sure that the people who are to admister the ASVAB are there as well as us
- 135 as a recruiter I have never recieved any type of training on interperiting asvab results. The common practice in the NRD is to have the ED SPEC do this, however being in a rural/remote station, it is almost imposible to have the ED SPEC take the time to come out to the schools with us to interpert the results, and as a result we have had many schools refuse or simply drop the asvab testing program.
- 136 iT SHOULD BE MADATED THAT ALL STUDENTSS TAKE THE TEST OR MORE EMPHASIS SHOULD BE PLACED ON IT AT SCHOOLS.
- 137 My only suggestion would be to more evenly divide the number of High School ASVABs between the branches of service.
- 138 test only juniors and seniors
- 139 Post examination interpretation of test results should be a MANDATORY portion of the testing program. Dates and



times should be planned by the school counselor or POC for the exam, and should be disseminated to the students taking the exam PRIOR to the exam date. A pattern of poor attendance for the interpretation at a school should be basis for discontinuance of the program at that school. Too many students use the test only as an opportunity to skip class, and most students never get the tools needed to use the test to their advantage. Also, the majority of students never get face-to-face with a recruiter as a result of the test. I strongly believe that if the interpretation was mandatory, and performed by a servicemember, the effectiveness of the program for recruiting purposes would be increased significantly.

140 Proctoring an ASVAB is perhaps the largest waste of a recruiter's time. Would strongly recommend discontinuing, or at least cease recruiter proctoring.

141 INFORMATION FROM ACROSS THE NATION ON POSITIVE WAYS TO SELL THE ASVAB TEST TO HIGH SCHOOL COUNSELORS. WHAT WORKS AND WHAT DOESN'T. WOULD BE HELPFUL IN RAISING THE ATTENDANCE OF THE ASVAB TESTS IN MY AREA.

142 a problem is that most of the educational specialist don't get out to these schools and it is hurting recruiting bad a some point back in the older days they was in the schools and we was testing that 20 to 30% asvab tester and number was very high.

143 More emphasis on training school counselors on importance of taking the ASVAB at school, even for the future.

144 Proctors for ASVAB from schools or OPM. Reasons: Most schools prefer not to have a recruiter's presence around the school population, they would feel more at ease with the test being given, and given to a wider range of students if we weren't present. Most counselors won't allow upper students to take the ASVAB, so we can't get their info, and possibly recruit them, they try to shelter them from us. Mandatory ASVAB Reads from the Test Administrators. Reasons: consistency with the reads themselves, most of us just wing the whole evolution and eventually find a groove, but we have nothing solid. The TA's are more welcome as an enhancing service to the students, we are not, we are symbolically only there to rob them. Eliminates other service recruiters from having a profound influence on the recruitment of the students taking the test, traditionally those who read the ASVAB for the school, write a majority of the NCO's from that

school off of an ASVAB. Most of my recommendations lead to a shift of responsibility from Recruiters to OPM personnel, but I feel this would enhance the whole program in many ways. This test needs to be given to all students, and I think if we were out of the loop, except for the receipt of the scores, the counselors and faculty would feel free to test all students, at the JR & SR levels. This would benefit us by having a clearer picture of our upper market, identifying upper mental group diversity, eliminating testing and recruitment of non qualifying people and would give those who are sheltered from an outlet to the military by counselor and school administrations, a way to send out to us that they are ready. Thank you for this block on the survey.

- 145 overall this is a waste of gov't money to test all kids, most don't pass, or are even qualified and the asvab is generally negatively viewed in most areas, so money spent on career exploration part are not well spent nor recieved from our perspective.
- 146 The testing of juniors greatly increases the chance of the National Guard and or Reserves finding those underclassmen interested in the military.
- 147 more school cooperation
- 148 The High School ASVAB is a valuable tool for the students to get an idea as to what additional scholarships they possibly qualify for. The fact that the Navy's college money is not determined by the annual family income, greatly improves those who would not be qualified for \$36,000 for college based on a financial status evaluation.
- 149 test results printed out on regular 8x11 paper would be nice.
- 150 ENCOURAGE THE SCHOOL TO GET MORE PEOPLE TO SIGN UP.
- 151 results from test scores (pass or fail) should be sent on students who either plans MILITARY or those who are unsure.
- 152 SOME OF THE SCHOOLS IN THIS TIME AND ERA REQUIRE STUDENTS TO ASVAB, BUT FROM MY PAST EXPERIENCE CONDUCTING THE ASVAB, THESE KIDS PARTICIPATE UNDER UNDUE DURESS. IT SHOULD BE OPTIONAL. THIS WAY WHEN WE RECEIVE THE ASVAB SCORES AT RECUITING STATIONS THERE LEGITIMATE.

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